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# H O M E :

## A BOOK FOR THE FAMILY.

BY THE  
REV. W. K. TWEEDIE, D.D.,  
AUTHOR OF "SEED-TIME AND HARVEST; OR, SOW WELL AND REAP WELL,"  
"LAMP TO THE PATH," ETC. ETC.



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"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."—PSALM ci. 2.

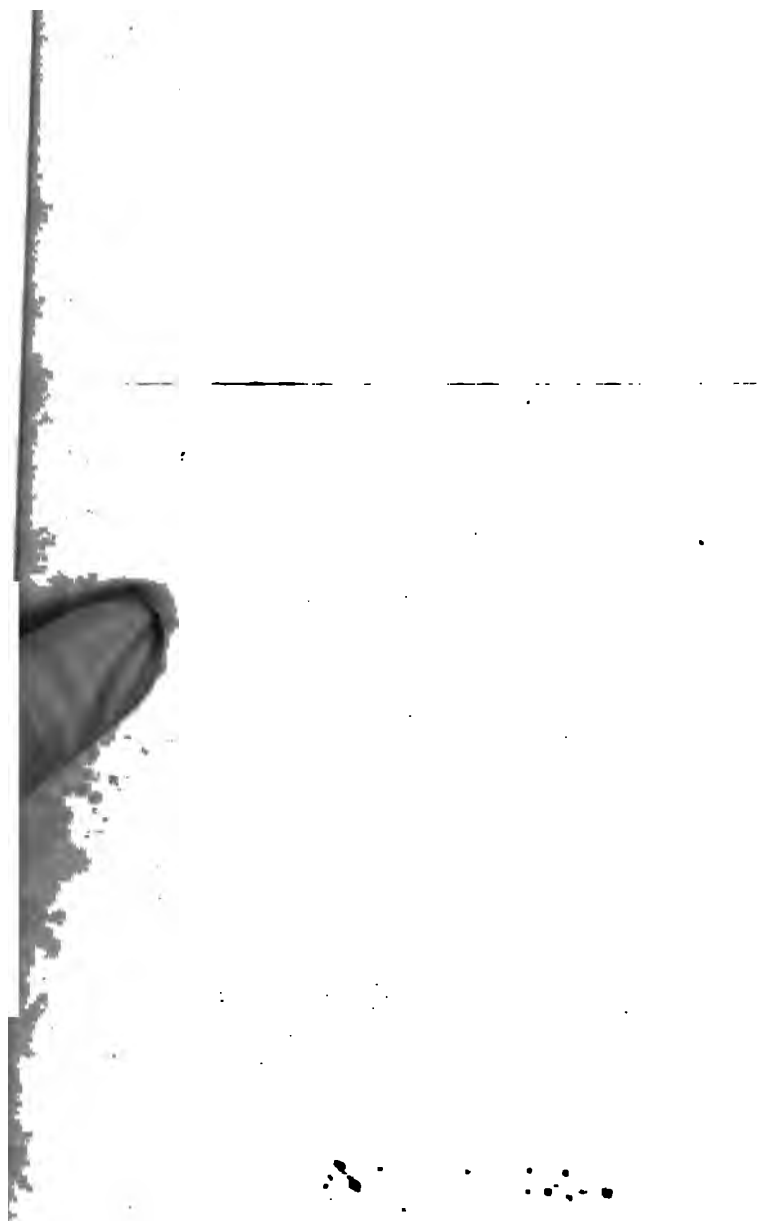
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## PREFACE.

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IT is a favourable sign of our times to see so much attention now concentrated upon Home, its laws, and its general constitution, as a great medicating power in society. Both in this country and America—the only two nations in the world where the Divine Institution has full scope for development—the works now published and the efforts put forth upon this subject are full of promise for the future, as well as of present joy to a Christian philanthropist.

Nor are these efforts either too soon employed or too wide in their range. Dreaming speculators would supersede that Institution, which we owe exclusively to the Bible, and abolish all its venerable sanctities. An erring philanthropy would supplement it, as if God's method of governing our families were not sufficiently wise. One man would transform the Homes of a nation into a series of parallelograms, and there cure our social ills as if by some charm. Others, with a similar object, prefer the circle. A third party would transmute a nation into one

vast workshop, and elaborate there a remedy for whatever is found or fancied to be wrong. Others still would withdraw the young from the plastic power which God has placed in the hands of fathers and of mothers, and commit them to hospitals, asylums, and similar retreats, where the social nature of youth would be mutilated, or some of its deepest feelings overlaid and extirpated. To all these, priestcraft adds its distempering influence wherever it can, and causes alienation or divergence where there should be unison the most complete.

But against all such attempts, he who believes in the Divine Wisdom, and honours the great Father of all, will emphatically protest. Home influence, home maxims, home example, home piety, and home endearments should first be made what they ought to be, and then upheld in all their pre-eminence as vital forces in the souls of men. Where they are either abolished or neglected, we are conspiring against the highest interests of society, and all human substitutes for Home, except where a literal home is impossible, are counterfeits and corruptions. Man was made for the family, and the family for man, as surely as the eye and light are correlatives ; and he alone escapes the shoals of folly here who recognises and honours the radical law by which God would regulate our abodes.

Farther, The philanthropy of our age has become proverbial. It takes one class after another under its gene-

rous protection. By a "Song of the Shirt" it agitates alike the metropolis and the hamlet. In Prison and Penitentiary, in Ragged Schools and Ragged Churches, among shoeblacks, sweeps, gipsies, and beggars, benevolence is at work upon all the phases of misery. The crowned and the coroneted unite with the poor but pious visitant to his fellow-poor, in thus soothing sorrow, and trying to roll back the flowing tide of wretchedness.

And all these things are a joy. Yet that should not blind us to the fact, that much of that benevolence has not begun its work at the beginning. We can never clear our streets of youthful depredators, if ill-conditioned homes be constantly pouring forth new criminals, just as we can never lave a flowing fountain dry. The fountain-head must be medicated, ere the cure be radical—and Home is that fountain-head.

In studying this subject, conviction has deepened from hour to hour as to the solemn importance of a mother's duties. Hers is really the influence which moulds the world. Not warriors and their armies; not masters and their schools; not printing-presses and their products; not even ministers and their pulpits—but Christian mothers by their love, their lessons, their prayers, their example, their tears. The land in which such mothers are rife has a defence which no standing army can impart—the land where such mothers are rare is either hastening

to moral ruin, or is already ruined, and the treasures of Britain could not purchase immunity from that result. It is a law of God ; and never till mothers understand their mission, and in love to man's soul, or pity for his misery, seek grace to fulfil it, will the gloom which hangs over the future disappear. Their influence is to a soul what the dew is to flowers when they spread their bosom to the sun, and one of Britain's mightiest blessings is the multitude of her prayerful mothers.

An attempt is here made to exhibit, in some of their multiform relations, the laws which should preside in a Christian Home. In the First Part, we glance at the component elements of a full Household ; and in the Second, we present some of the leading laws which should preside over all that is done. Human examples are copiously introduced, alike for warning and for guidance ; but the Word of God is the supreme, the only standard. With that standard ever in view, were this Volume, or a better, read chapter by chapter in our Homes, the Spirit of all Grace might bless His own truth, to render them holier, happier, and, more commonly than they are, a vestibule to the house not made with hands, the Home of many mansions in the skies.

EDINBURGH, *December 15, 1856.*

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# HOME.

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## PART I.—THE MEMBERS OF HOME.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### A MODEL HOME.

"I will sing of mercy and judgment : unto thee, O Lord, will I sing. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes : I hate the work of them that turn aside ; it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me : I will not know a wicked person. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off : him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me : he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house ; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord."—PSALM ci.

No prophet's power is needed to predict that the more closely the constitution of Home is studied, the more manifest will the proofs of Divine wisdom there appear. In the bosom of every family there lie folded up the elements or the germs of an influence, which, if properly developed, would produce abundant fruit unto holiness ; but, on the other hand, if these germs be neglected, all that might be morally lovely is soon blighted and disfigured.

Now, in studying a Home, and trying to develop its principles into a holy life, the Word of God is our only guide and

model. Let us, then, at the outset, examine it as the framework into which all besides must be woven.

It was a maxim of Matthew Henry, that wherever we have a house, God should have a Church; and Howard the philanthropist announced the same truth, when he said—"Wherever I have a home, God shall have an altar." But one more favoured than either of the two, has expounded that idea in the hundred and first of his psalms. In some respects, it must describe a Model Home, for it tells what was law and usage in the abode of "a man after God's own heart." It was David's purpose or his habit to recognise all God's dealings with him, and whether they brought sorrow or joy, he found in them all some materials for praise; he could "sing in the ways of the Lord." His lot, no doubt, had been a chequered one. False friends at home, and enemies abroad; his own heart, and his own household; his princes and his subjects; his sons and his daughters had all, at times, occasioned grief to David. There might be judgments in some of these things, but there was also mercy; and as he knew that all things work together for good to them that love God, the king employed that harp which had soothed the dark spirit of Saul to extract gladness also from the dark dispensations of his lot. He was determined that neither the laughter of prosperity nor the tears of affliction should unfit him for sacred songs, for he felt that family mercies and family griefs equally call us to family religion.

Nor did David merely acquiesce either in the awards of judgment or the donations of mercy—he learned wisdom from them all, and "behaved himself wisely in a perfect way." Wisely, for his God was his guide—and in a perfect way, for the law of the Lord is perfect, and it directed

David's steps. He knew that though the believer, amid all his aspirations, can never reach perfection here, neither can he ever cease to aim at it; and thus guided, or thus pressed upward, David could exclaim, "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies . . . they walk in his ways." They are not the victims of make-believes: they do not substitute man for God: they do not deify passion, and the world is neither their model nor their joy.

But more than this. David's spirit yearned for communion with its God. He could not bear a cloud, nay, not a shadow between the Holy One and his soul. He panted for God, the living God, as the hart pants for the water brooks; and one reason for that ardent longing was, that David might "walk within his house with a perfect heart." It is God's presence that sweetens everything there. No root of bitterness is then allowed to spring up. Iniquity is put away from such an abode. Man's opinions and man's practices find their proper level. A heart right with God presides. When joy and gladness come, they are mellowed by the fear of the Lord; and when crosses are sent, the Almighty arm is leant upon the more. The dwellings of the righteous thus become the abodes of a holy joy or of a chastened grief, and the house which will soon crumble into dust is a vestibule to the house eternal in the heavens. The believer, in the most secret recess of his home, as well as in the glare of day, thus "walks circumspectly, not as a fool, but as wise."

Or further: this man of God was to "set no wicked thing before his eyes." He knew that God and Mammon, that Christ and Belial, that the Spirit of Holiness and the spirit of the world, could not harmoniously dwell in the same abode. First holiness and then happiness; first a pure home and then

a peaceful one, was David's aim. None knew better than he the misery which cleaves to sin. He had had reason to speak of "bones broken," of light quenched, and of hope turned into despair, by guilt in his own case; and, warned by the experience of the past, he was now to live upon his guard. "No wicked thing" was to stand before him. Antagonisms could not be harmonies there. "The men who turn aside," whether as apostates from the truth, or as wanderers from the narrow way, David was determined to shun. He was not to live on terms of brotherhood with them, for that would have been to become the enemy of God; and, however he might pity them, or deplore their ways, he would not become a partaker of sin by smiling on the sinner. His companions must be the excellent of the earth, or he would sit alone upon the housetop.

Further, therefore, in contemplating the state of his Home, and planning for its welfare, David resolved not even to "know a wicked person." His own conduct, and the misery which flowed from it to his heart and his home—the doings of Absalom and Ahithophel, as well as of not a few in his household, had shewn him too clearly what anguish cleaves to guilt. It was not merely its burning shame, or its harrowing days and sleepless nights, when conscience had regained the ascendant—it was the dishonour done to God, that roused all this believer to holy resolution. "A froward heart," then, as the origin of evil, and "a wicked person," as its propagator, were to be repudiated by David. He would neither walk with the ungodly, nor stand with the sinner, nor sit with the scorner. His house was to be no asylum for the godless or the froward. As fire and water are contrasts, so is the nature of this man of God opposed to ungodliness.

He felt that an unholy soul is like a house haunted by the worst kind of evil spirits, and, to escape from sorrow, he set his face against iniquity.

But David was a Ruler as well as a Householder. He had a kingdom as well as a home, and he further determined not to foster any iniquity in his empire. "The slanderer was to be cut off:" "a high look and a proud heart" David would not suffer. Slander is prompted by hatred, and hatred is the germ of murder. A proud heart, if it had the power, would dethrone the Supreme, and put the proud one in his place, and the king of Israel would not tolerate such rebellion against God most high. Nay, with him the High and Holy One was paramount; he resolved to see that God's will was done on earth as it is done in heaven, and he practised what his son taught, but often forgot to do—he "feared God and kept his commandments, for that is the whole duty of man."

But, next: while thus shunning all that could defile, David's soul embraced "the faithful of the land." "His eyes were to be upon them;" that is, he regarded them with complacency as we look upon a beautiful object. He searched them out and made them the men of his right hand, his bosom friends and allies.

Then, for servants, David would choose none but "him that walketh in a perfect way." Deceit he would not tolerate: rebellion against the King of kings was incompatible with integrity towards an earthly superior; and the firm determination of David, therefore, was—"He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." Seven times each day did he praise his God. In the night seasons he sought communion

with Him, and all that would have been marred had the king chosen the ungodly for his associates, or even for his servants. The moral discomfort of dwelling side by side with falsehood made it impossible for him to endure it. Such moral degradation chafed his soul, for he could not both smile upon the false, and live in the smile of Him who is holy and true. He felt the presence of the ungodly to be contagious and deadening. To countenance them is to encourage and harden them in guilt—to trust them is only to afford opportunity for further crime. As firmly, therefore, as language could express it, David records the resolution not to harbour the deceitful, not to tolerate in his home, nay, in his sight, “him that telleth lies,” and how happy would our homes become were such maxims there supreme!

Such, then, were the purposes, and such the principles of David regarding his Home; these things signalled it far more than gilded domes, or pillars of cedar could do. Truth, in all its beautiful manifestations, was to be patronised on the one hand, and practised on the other. “The ungodly shall not dwell in my house” was the explicit decree of the king. A proud look and a lying tongue are an abomination to God, and they were the same to his servant—he pitied them, and put them far away.

Now starting from this divine model, it is easy to mark what would result were it faithfully copied.

How pleasant the task of ruling a home, were the truth of God enthroned as the guide of all, and nothing but that truth tolerated there!

How sweet the intercourse between parent and child, or between master and servant, were the soul of each taught to make God’s truth his sovereign standard!

How would the pride of power among superiors, or the sorrows of servitude among inferiors, alike disappear; and how would all this serve "to guard our nest against the wily snake!"

How surely would the families which call upon the name of the Lord increase in the land, were men to make God's mind theirs as David did! The dwellings of Jacob would then be loved even as the gates of Zion—that is, the believer's house would become a house of God. "The Church in the house," as in the case of Cornelius the centurion, of Aquila and Priscilla, of Nymphas and Philemon,\* would be the meeting-place between God and souls, and joy as serene as that of summer sunset would be diffused where confusion and many evil works too often prevail. Household joys and fireside memories would exert a deeper influence upon life, and the last promise of the Old Testament would be all fulfilled—"The hearts of the fathers would be turned to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers," while the dread alternative, "lest I come and smite the earth with a curse," would be averted from men's homes.

But the case of David, in regard to his home, is more instructive still. Never man knew better than he, that

"It is not they who idly dwell  
In cloister gray, or hermit cell,  
In prayer and vigil, night and day,  
Wearing all their time away,  
Lord of heaven! that serve thee well."

Nay, David was a monarch. His empire was one of the widest then in the world, or fast becoming so. His cares, therefore, were manifold. Armies had to be led, and battles fought. Materials for a temple to Jehovah had to be collected. Allies had to be honoured, and enemies sub-

\* Acts x. 2; Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Col. iv. 15; and Philemon 2.



dued. Rebellion had to be crushed, and conspiracy checked. Laws had to be passed, and their obedience watched over. Hostile princes demanded the monarch's watchful eye; in brief, crowds of disturbing influences beset him both by night and day. And yet, ruling over millions as he did, sustaining in his single person the responsibility of first magistrate and first captain, this wonderful man had time to spare for the concerns, nay, even for the details of his home. He knew it to be the nursery either of all that is good and true, or of all that is godless and false. Even on his throne, therefore, did David find leisure to announce the principles which should regulate a well-ordered family. He prescribed a panacea for social ills, and did what would tend to the subversion of evil, were his maxims firmly obeyed.

Nor was all this a mere theory with David—a fancy sketch—a visionary scene, beautiful as propounded, but neglected in practice. Nay, amid some of his most attractive or most exciting public duties, he was careful to “return to bless his household.” Even on his dying bed, when his thoughts clung to the well-ordered covenant and its Eternal Head, he could not but glance once again at his home. The thought of disorder there added one pang more to the dying monarch's sorrow, and the complaint uttered with some of his last breaths was, that his house was not right with God.\* Like another Hebrew captain, amid the cares of a vast migration, David had determined that he and his house should serve the Lord. Neither the cares of state, nor the disquietudes of war, nor the harassments of a thousand duties were allowed to interfere with that object; and the king of Israel hence becomes both a model and a rebuke. A model—for should not the

\* Compare 2 Sam. vi. 20, and xxiii. 5.

principles which guided him, much more guide us who have none of his cares to plead in defence of neglect? And a rebuke—for does not the practice of David, do not his purposes and his vows shame those who allow themselves to be seduced from the right government of home by cares which become sins when they interfere with a duty so solemn, so binding, and so blessed?

But is not David's standard somewhat too high? Is it possible for us to do as he did?—It is so possible, that God has made it an universal duty, and to neglect it is to court sorrow for our homes. Let love to God and man become a presiding principle, and all will be as easy as it is binding. Just let the soul feel like the dying legislator,\* when he panted out the words—“Jesus Christ—love—the same thing,” and all will be plain. Constrained by that love, all that is needful will be attempted, and much of it achieved. No parent who loves his children—no householder who feels responsible to God for the spiritual wellbeing of his home, will then deem even the standard of David too high; and to be guided by it is to be “glad with the spirit of the peace divine.”

Now it is in the hope that the principles which guided him may guide many more, that we here attempt to delineate a Christian Home—its component parts, its joys, its sorrows, its maxims, and its aims. Around that sacred name there gather some of the deepest convictions, the most endearing associations, and most sunny influences which control the mind of man.

“In every clime the magnet of man's soul,  
Touch'd by remembrance, vibrates to that pole.”

Even when the King Eternal would depict his deepest love

\* Sir James Mackintosh.

and tenderness, the language employed is often linked with home. "Like as a father pitieth his children, the Lord pitieth them that fear him;" "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you," and a hundred other texts, indicate the spirit of God's religion; and if more be needed, we find enough in the words—"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that mourneth and is in bitterness for his first born."\* In other words, the profoundest of all emotions can find an adequate expression only when represented by the anguish of domestic bereavement, or the tenderness of domestic ties; and as the Word of God thus gives such prominence to home, we should learn to go and do likewise. Let its spirit, its principles and maxims, be in unison with the mind of God, and it becomes a fountain of felicity for ever. But let the world rule there; let the God of all the families of the earth be neglected or disowned; then parents with their children, and masters with their servants, are only preparing to feed the worm which never dies. It is to deepen the felicities of home that these chapters are sent forth; and they go full of the conviction, that none but parents who are taught by the Spirit of God can rule a household in His fear.

\* Psalm ciii. 13; Isa. lxvi. 13; Zech. xii. 10.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CONSTITUTION OF HOME.

A Believer's Home—Adam's—Abraham's—Hagar's case—Jacob and Joseph—David's Home—Jewish Corruptions—Home Relations of the Bible—Their Extent and Influence—Examples

One example of a believer's home, and of the maxims which should guide it, has just been given. It is important, however, to notice how prominent the family is made in the Word of God; and to lay a firm foundation for what is about to be advanced regarding home, its power or its perversion, its sorrows or its joys, it may be well to glance at some of the scriptural accounts which shew that home is the matrix in which not a little of revelation is moulded. The home of Adam, for example, suggests a thousand lessons at once by its innocence and its guilt. The home of Abraham, in like manner, indicates how closely the truth of God is linked with the domestic constitution: it is often remarked that to that man's family we may trace the Bible, the Redeemer, God's Church on earth—in short, all that is hopeful here, and blessed hereafter; and from these prominent cases we may see how important it is to be well informed as to the power of a household for good or for ill, according as it is rightly used or else perverted by man.

And, first, we know that in very early times the sons of God, or men professing godliness, "took wives of all whom

they chose;" in other words, God was not consulted in regard to marriage. Men walked after the devices of their own hearts, and entered into the closest of all relations without the guidance of that wisdom which comes from above. And what was the result of this abuse? Crime increased so rapidly, that it repented God that man was ever made. So vital is the family constitution to the right guidance of the world, that when that constitution was outraged, the crisis of guilt sped on, till the waters of the deluge came to wash it away, and proclaim with such a voice as the world will never hear again, the misery which results from such a moral outrage—the vital inter-dependence between a God-made union and a happy home.

Further: in the case of Hagar and Ishmael, we find another illustration of the results which follow a violation of the right constitution of home. That unhappy mother and her unhappy son were thrust forth from an abode, which, even before that event, had ceased to be ordered according to the will of God. Envy and strife were there, and the whole of her history shews how certain it is that no man can tamper with the family constitution, without sooner or later leading to woe. The youth exposed in the desert—the weeping mother who could not look upon her dying boy, and all the sad accompaniments of that hour, tell us how vital and how delicate are the laws which the God of all the families of the earth has given to home. Concentrated good; or, failing that, concentrated evil is there.

Again: we know the partiality which the patriarch Jacob cherished for Joseph his son. The dress and the early demeanour of the boy alike bear testimony to that partiality; and the father's terrible grief when he was told that Joseph

was no more, attests the same thing. He had forgotten that

" All the blessings which surround us here,  
Are but as loans from the all-bounteous Love,  
Given to be used, not worshipped ;"

and we know to what results such fondness led. Jacob thereby outraged a radical law of the family. He exalted one of its members, and by consequence depressed the rest ; and as he had violated a vital principle, the evil recoiled upon himself and the object of his ill-judged partiality. No doubt, in this case, He who brings good out of evil, made the folly of that erring father to praise Him ; but, in the first instance, the design to murder Joseph, then the falsehood heaped upon falsehood by his brothers, then the long, wasting anguish of the gray-haired father, and lastly the bondage, the temptations, and imprisonment of the favourite himself, all manifest the delicacy of the family constitution, or tend to shew that no man can tamper with it without producing sorrow, a reaction, and recoil.

Or, further still : In the days of David we see, in many respects, to what exquisite pain the inter-connexions of home may lead when rudely interfered with. He was a monarch. Millions moved at his nod : his word was life or death. But a little child was dying in that monarch's home, and neither a crown nor a sceptre—neither an empire nor a throne, could assuage that father's grief. The tie which bound him to his child was so close that all his kingdom had to offer could not dry the tears of the one for the other—so intimate and strong are the bonds of home. Without adverting at all to the sad laceration of these bonds in other instances in David's life, this single case sufficiently shews how closely man's happiness is associated with his home.

Or, once more : Let us pass on to the time when the Jewish system was tottering to its fall. Jesus has come. The land is reeking with corruption. As the crisis of all, the Saviour weeps over Jerusalem because it would not let him save it, and what of the family relation then—a tie which should have knit parent to child, child to parent, and all to God ? The answer shews the utter degeneracy of the Jews. “Who-soever shall say to his father or his mother—‘It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me,’ and honour not his father and his mother, he shall be free,” had become a Jewish maxim. In other words, a high religious reason was pled for declining to aid a parent in decay. Hypocritical pretences cloaked a heartless conduct, and as a result of this disruption of the family tie, the dislocation of all society had followed—a nation was preparing for its tomb amid scenes which all history cannot parallel.

But, without enumerating more of the examples which the Scriptures supply, let it be enough to observe that the family relation regulated not a few of the sacrifices of old. Job offered continually, “according to the number of his household.” Then, in cases of signal sorrow, “every family was to mourn apart.” Moreover, the land of Canaan was divided according to the families of the Hebrews. Farther, as God wears the character of a Father, and the Saviour that of a Son, so that Father of mercies “sets the solitary in families;” while, on the other hand, there is to be “fury upon all the families which call not on the name of the Lord.” In every way, God has thus recognised the constitution which he has stamped upon home—it is inwoven with the whole of revelation, and it were difficult to tell how much of the Scriptures would disappear, or how far the plan of redemp-

tion itself would be mutilated, were we to cancel the portions which are dependent on the domestic relations. God's Church is again and again called his "House." All the millions in the successive generations of the Jews are called "the House of Israel." "He and all his house" is a phrase of very frequent occurrence. But, in brief, a fine net-work is thrown over the whole of revelation, displaying, like a beautiful transparency, the importance of the domestic constitution—or telling how deeply it enters into the history of man. "The fathers," mean all who have lived before us; "the children of men," are the whole human race; and thus the family relation ever stands out as one of the most prominent of all that belong to God's world—the precepts, the promises, the prophecies, all rise or terminate in some view of a family or a home.

Were we, in like manner, to study the history of the early Church, it might at once surprise and instruct us to notice how largely the Saviour employed domestic and family ties to advance the work of his life—his mission to our world. One who has studied this subject with profound convictions, has been careful to shew that four of the apostles were from one family, namely, James and Jude, Simon and Matthew, from that of Cleophas and Mary; two from another, Peter and Andrew, the sons of Jonas; and other two from a third, namely, James and John, the sons of Zebedee and Salome.\*

The prominent idea, then, in the Bible is not that of a community, a society, or a kingdom, but of a household or a family. That is recognised or consecrated as the basis of all other relations. Let that remain faithful to God, and society is founded on a rock; it will be prosperous and

\* Anderson's "Domestic Constitution," Section 6.



, happy. But let families break loose from His government, and by that revolt they may have imitated Samson when he tore down the pillars of a temple ; but, like Samson also, they perish in the ruin they have caused. They may seem to be happy, but that happiness is transient,

“ As when the midnight lightnings cast  
A short-lived radiance o’er the plain.”

When we behold, then, the importance which is attached to home by God, only wise, we are in some degree prepared to study with profit the character of a family moulded according to His mind ; we may be able to point out the fountainhead of man’s joys, upon the one hand, or of his sorrows upon the other.

## CHAPTER III.

## NAMES FOR HOME.

Ideal Homes—Home joys—"The Paradise of Childhood"—"God's first Church"—  
"A Miniature of Heaven"—"A Nursery for Heaven"—"The Republic of  
Home"—"A little World"—The Mimosa and The Sundew—The paramount  
power, Love.

It would not be difficult to depict an ideal home, and so present one of the faultless exaggerations which the world never beheld realised. Forgetting man's inborn selfishness, or refusing to recognise what must ever be kept in view if we would not make all our opinions errors, we might present some fancy sketch which would belong neither to earth nor to heaven. A household might then be viewed as a sanctuary or a church, and every member as one of the living stones which are in preparation for their place in the heavenly temple. We might describe that abode as one in which there are no separate interests, and therefore no collisions, no fierce passions, and therefore no violence upon the one hand, nor wrong upon the other. Having presented such a picture, men might be asked to admire and to copy it, to see there what home should be, and then to imitate the model. A kind of golden age might thus be reproduced, as poetry has often done, and home might be robbed of its moral power by being made a fancy picture.

Now our homes *should* be all that has been sketched, but there is only one which fully corresponds to the sketch—

the home of the Redeemer on high. Even on earth, however, so much that is blessed and benign gathers around home that it were difficult to exaggerate its felicity when the truth of God presides. In spite of all the interruptions to peace which

"Neglects of temper  
Shed into the crystal cup,"

such are the interlinkings of heart with heart—such the character of a godly father, the priest and guide of all beneath his roof; of a godly mother, their guardian angel, and dear to all as their own soul; of children trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; of domestics guided more by the fear of God than that of man—that the domestic constitution appears to be indeed one of the most signal proofs at once of the wisdom and the goodness of the great Father of all. But to shed some light upon man's views of that constitution, let us next consider some of the titles by which he delights to name it.

Was Paradise an abode of purity and peace? Or will the New Eden above be one of unmingled beatitude? Then "the Paradise of Childhood," "the Eden of Home," are names applied to the family abode. In that paradise, all may appear as smiling and serene to childhood as the untainted garden did to unfallen man—even the remembrance of it, amid distant scenes of woe, has soothed some of the saddest hours of life, and crowds of mourners have spoken of

"A home, that paradise below  
Of sunshine, and of flowers,  
Where hallow'd joys perennial flow  
By calm sequester'd bowers."

—There childhood nestles like a bird which has built its abode among roses; there the cares and the coldness of earth

are, as long as possible, averted. Flowers there bloom, or fruits invite on every side, and there paradise would indeed be restored, could mortal power ward off the consequences of sin. This new garden of the Lord would then abound in beauty unsullied, and trees of the Lord's planting, bearing fruit to his glory, would be found in plenty there—it would be reality, and not mere poetry, to speak of

" My own dear quiet home,  
The Eden of my heart."

Or another name, which some delight to apply to home, is "God's first Church." It is there that we first learn to fear, to love, and to adore Him; there that we get our first lessons regarding both holiness and sin; there that we first feel as if the hand of the Saviour were on our head to bless us; and there, in the first years of unquestioning, unsuspecting faith, that we display those dispositions which make a little child a model disciple, or which explain why the Saviour said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Every Christian family ought to be, as it were, a little Church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rules."\* "If there were a Church in every house, there would be such a Church in our land as would make it a praise throughout the whole earth."† We give no place, we repeat, to mere visionary pictures; but, setting aside all that is fabled upon the subject, it is still true that man's first home is God's first Church to all who are trained as children ought to be—the heart and the hand are both pointed heavenward there.

"The scene is touching, and the heart is stone  
That feels not at that sight."

No doubt, the world *may* reign in the soul after all; the

\* President Edwards.

† Matthew Henry.

impressions even of such a home, may prove like a writing upon sand, upon water, or the yielding air. But it can still be said with truth—

"Lord, with what care hast thou begirt us round?  
 Parents first season us . . . . .  
 Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,  
 Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,  
 The sound of glory ringing in our ears;  
 Without our shame, within our conscience,  
 Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears,"

all, all are found within the sacred pale of our "first Church," and the heart which can resist its sanctities is preparing to be at once a tormentor and tormented.

"A Miniature of Heaven," "a Copy of Heaven," "a Nursery for Heaven," are other names by which home is known. Young immortals should there enter upon the true immortality, and the love which reigns paramount in the house not made with hands should be ascendant in our abodes on earth. As the father is likened to the prophet of home, its teacher, its guide, and model, all should be his disciples, while the mind of the Great Teacher presides at once over the head and the members. Moreover, as the father is called the priest of home, the other inmates should surely be the worshippers; or, as he is likened to a king among his subjects, obedience should be universal, while the Eternal One is crowned Lord of all. It is His will that makes heaven what it is—be that will done by the families of men, and they become component parts of the great family of God; the kingdom of heaven is among us of a truth.

But this suggests another of the titles lavished upon a household; it is called "The Republic of Home." The rights of all are alike in their origin—God; and in their aim or tendency, namely—God again. There is to be neither lordly

domineering nor wild revolt. There is rule, order, subjection, prompt obedience—else there could be no liberty ; for as the service of God is perfect freedom, obedience to Him, in our homes or elsewhere, is but another name for joy. What Socialism or Communism seeks to promote by outraging some of the deepest principles in man's nature. Home advances in harmony with them all, and when conducted as the Author of all good designed it to be, the abode of our youth is at once the birthplace of our blessedness, and the bulwark of our rights. Birds at night flock to their nests, and wild beasts to their lair ; certain fishes periodically resort, by a strong instinct, to the place where they were spawned ; some birds, by a sagacity yet more marvellous, return, season after season, from far off lands, to the eaves where they were hatched ; and, in like manner, many a wretched exile has felt the attractions of home, with its remembered liberty and joy, to be so strong that absence was worse than death. Some have accordingly returned, though, in seeking their home, they found only a grave.

Or, finally : home has been called " A Little world." We are there trained for acting the part which shall be allotted to us upon a wider arena. Obedience to law, implicit and cordial deference to authority, sympathy with suffering, affection, duty, hope, fear, are all brought into vivid play ; and it is not difficult for an observant eye to note or to predict how each young inmate will act in public life. The selfishness of one promises woe to himself and to others. The generosity of another points him out as a future benefactor. Pre-eminence over playfellows, or cunning, or cruelty, or dishonesty, or high-toned honour, all find their place in the little world of home, in training for the wider platform of

society. Here, as well as in the country churchyard, poetry, nay, plainest prose, may find

“Some village Hampden, that, with dauntless breast,  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood ;  
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest,  
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood,”

while all presage the future which stretches far beyond the horizon of the passing day, and will become a busy present when these young souls have taken their place in the battle of life ; when they have chosen God or Mammon, Christ or Belial, life or death.

Such are some of the aspects of Home, as indicated by the names which are sometimes applied to it ; and even from these glimpses, it would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of the domestic constitution. Most of the corruptions of society may be traced up to its neglect, while the history alike of the world and of the Church, from the days of the deluge downward, proclaims the blessings which may flow from home well-ordered. Let God be supreme there ; let His will preside, and streams of joy will emanate from that fountainhead—streams ever deepening and fertilising as they flow. But let the will of God be superseded by that of man ; let children assert their independence, and be allowed to rule both themselves and others ; let the family be self-centred, instead of being lovingly knit to God—then hastening ills are at hand ; the gray hairs of parents will be brought in sorrow to the grave. The Phaeton of fable becomes the model—the little world will be all on fire.

And when the delicate framework of the Home constitution has been dislocated, what power can re-adjust it ? Who shall restore the bloom of the plum if only a finger tip has

touched it? Who shall recompose the nervous system of the mimosa or the sun-dew after it has been rudely outraged? No human hand, nay, the touch of the kindest, only deranges that plant the more; and in like manner, no human legislation, no mortal device, can rectify or readjust the family when its parts have been displaced. It is the model of all rule, upon the one hand, and of all obedience, upon the other; and when that model is interfered with, moral confusion must ensue. There is no cure for the distemper but just to return to the simple truth—the authoritative mind of God. It is the system of love revealed in the gospel, that system “which makes one thing of all theology,” that must reign in our homes, paramount, unchallenged, and alone. Then it is well—for God is first.



## CHAPTER IV.

## SCRIPTURAL VIEWS OF HOME.

The Fountainhead of Rivers—The Elements of Society—Its Degeneracy—The Means of its Restoration—First, the Human—Knowledge—Refinement—Second, the Divine—Goodness—Holiness—Godlikeness—Family Training—Its long Continuance—The Benefit.—The Reigning Influence, Love—The Regulator, God's Truth—A Moral Factory—The Church and School dependent upon Home—Home obliterated—The Consequences—Examples—France—The East.

WE have often crossed a high tableland in this island, from whose sloping sides, at three points not far from each other, three important rivers hasten to the sea. One of them runs westward, and, though at first only a threadlike rill, ere it reaches the ocean it could bear upon its bosom the wealth and the navies of an empire. A second stream zig-zags eastward, and waters some of the scenes the most renowned in history and song of all that the northern section of this country contains. The third stream finds its way quietly to the deep. There is nothing remarkable, though there is not a little that is beautiful, along its margin. Its course is brief; but its banks also have witnessed some of the most stirring events of past ages of rampant feudalism and its attendant pillage.

The whole is an emblem of Home. From it, as from a centre, proceeds branch after branch, each producing its own effects, or wearing its own characteristics. One is signalled for good, and operates like a Howard; another for evil, and

stalks among men a demon; one steals placidly through life, lowly in sphere, and unnoticed in character; another ascends to some proud position, and is perhaps the victim of his own success. But all are swelling the aggregate of good or of evil in the world; all are casting in their lot either with those who are blessings or those who are banes to society.

And since so much depends upon home, and its influence, it were well did we study with care its constitution and its laws. Let us next, then, glance at some of these.

The individual—the family—the neighbourhood—the country or the commonwealth—the world—these form the order in which society is developed. “Persons are elements of families; families are the elements of which both churches and kingdoms or commonwealths are made up.”\* Now, if the second in this list depends on the first for its character, it is equally obvious that the second, or the family, must largely mould or modify the rest. It is there, as we have seen, that resistless influences come into operation, and just as the constant dropping of water can smoothe even a granite rock, do these influences mould and fashion society. And it is the purpose of God over all that it should be so. When man became a fallen creature, a great problem was raised, which has not yet been adjusted by any human device—How counteract that degeneracy? How lift man from that degradation? How replace the statue on its pedestal? How restore happiness and purity to man? In solving that problem he has sought out many inventions.

Impart knowledge, is the prescription of some—and that will rectify all. Knowledge is power, and with that in his possession, it is argued, man will soon emerge from moral

\* John Howe.

ruin, and take his place among the pure again. It is melancholy, however, to be forced to add that, though knowledge be power, it is often only power for evil. *In itself* it possesses no charm against guilt—nay, it is often found in closest league with the despotism which oppresses—the crime which embrates—the habits which render degenerate man more degenerate still.

Refine, civilise, cultivate, and you will elevate, is the prescription of another; but here also the sad testimony of facts has long made it plain that to civilise man may only be to refine or gild his vices, not to extirpate them—to cultivate his powers may often prove but a prelude to their more ingenious abuse. Precious as culture is, and to be prosecuted with the heart and the soul, it contains, in itself, no antidote to man's native tendency to sin and death. It will end in sorrow at the verge of the eternal world.

Now when human devices are thus found to be inefficient, we appeal with the greater earnestness to the divine remedy. It is not knowledge, it is goodness; it is not refinement, it is holiness; it is not high culture, it is Godlikeness that is the heavenly antidote to misery. These will produce the effect, or rather these are the effects produced; and short of these, nothing can preserve society from corruption, or restore it after it has become corrupt. No seminary, however famous, no scholarship, however varied or profound, no supervision, however kindly or sleepless, can supply the place of God's appointed means. These means must be employed, in the first instance, in our Homes; and this brings us to consider the constitution of home, in some of its leading aspects.

And, first of all, contemplate that combination of powers which find their confluence and centre there. There is the

respect which is due to experience and to years. There is authority. There is power. There is example. Above all, there is love, tender, pre-eminent, and unequalled. By God's appointment, all these exert a moulding influence upon us at the time when we are most easily moulded, and some power of malignant influence is at work when all these are resisted, or when the young hasten to drink up iniquity in spite of such counteractives.

Moreover, we may here give prominence to the length of time during which the young are dependent upon parental protection. In a few weeks or months at most, the dam and her young, in other cases, are estranged for ever; they wander over the world alike unknowing and unknown to each other. With man, however, the case is far otherwise. For years of infancy, for other years of boyhood or girlhood, and often for still other years of opening maturity, the young are seldom from under the parental eye. From the first wail at birth, often till the time when a separate home is set up by themselves, do the young thus continue dependent, and during all that time wholesome influences continue to mould and regulate, if the home be Christian, or if God's will be there supreme. Affection plies its sleepless task. Authority wields its firm yet kindly sceptre. Ingenuity invents employments blended with amusement, and amusements which train and inform. Vice is no sooner seen than it is repressed. The good and the true are no sooner beheld than they are encouraged and promoted, and thus, by line upon line, here a little and there a little, the Divine Institution becomes the first of all seminaries, where children learn

“To tread with happy steps the path of duty,  
Beloved and loving.”

Its impressions are the deepest and most lasting, because they are the first and the tenderest; and unless the mind could be decomposed and cast to the winds like the body, the effects of home-influence, home-affection, and home-education can never be effaced. They may be trampled on or set at nought; but they have lodged a protest in the conscience which will continue to clamour for attention till the set time for hearing it has come. Penelope's web, woven with costly care, could be reduced to threads again, but the impressions of home are eternal. Parents, ponder that! Your words may seem unheeded now, your prayers disregarded. But they will be heard at last louder than the roar of the tempest, and when conscience awakes, you will be honoured and thanked.

Such is the wise ordination of heaven: it is thus that all the lessons of home are deepened and rendered perpetual. Just when the mind is most plastic is it most impressed. The twig is not merely bent, it is *set*; it is kept bent so long in a certain direction, that ever after that process it retains its tendency; its predilection is life-lasting, except where some mighty counter-influence interposes—and even that interposition is rarely for ever.

But another peculiarity in the domestic constitution is, that its influence is the influence of love—the most deep and powerful of all the feelings which control the life of man—something which confers a power as nearly creative as aught human can be.

Not mere authority: that might foster slaves and serfs; it could not train either a tender conscience, a loving heart, or a holy soul.

Not mere mechanical drilling by a scrupulous martinet:

that could form soldiers, who move without any will but one—a collection of arms and limbs, not men.

Not terror: that speaks only of bondage, and evermore causes a reaction.

Not these, then, but love should preside in our homes. That power, as it operates in a household, has been likened to the first snow-drop of spring, at once attracting and gladdening us—and as love is the first, so it is the mightiest and most lasting of all constraining powers. Revenge may convulse. Avarice may grasp the whole man, and make him, body and soul, its victim or its slave—emphatically a miser, that is a wretch. These and other strong passions may subdue and sway us for ill—but among all the influences which mould us for good, love is the unchallenged queen. Emanating from the bosom of Him who is love itself, it controls and softens all, unless they be clean gone in guilt. Affection elicits affection, and no need for very formal lessons, if there be a living example on the part of the parents. Home is then invested with a crowd of attractions. The rod which sways will be so light as to be unfelt; nay, the absence of it would lead to grief. The whole constitution of home would be outraged; the divine antidote to the ills of life would be bereft of its power, were the element of love to disappear. Founded upon divine authority, and presided over by affection, the family constitution will thus achieve what no earthly power need attempt—it can both sweeten bitter waters, and bring streams from the rock. It cannot make new creatures, but it can convince the thoughtless that they should be so.

Yet, we must add, none of these effects need be expected unless the truth of God be the regulator, at once of love

and of all besides. The Bible must temper authority or it will become despotism, and direct affection or it will degenerate into doating fondness. The Divine rule is here admirably minute. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."\* When parents are guided by such rules, affection will be swayed by wisdom, and will end in blessedness. The body in its place, and the soul in its—time and eternity in their due proportions, will be cared for. It will be seen, in short, that, strong as the language is, it is not too strong—the family may even reflect the attributes of the Great Father of all. It manifests His goodness in the copious happiness which it imparts; His mercy in the ample provision for remedying evil; His wisdom in the exquisite relations which are there created; His holiness in the purity which Home should foster, by a care which is sleepless, and a persistency which yields to no obstruction. In brief, deprive home of the Bible, and it becomes a centre of mere worldliness, or mere varnished ungodliness at the best—while, with the Word of God ascendant, and its Author honoured, loved, and feared, Home becomes radiant with the light of heaven; it is the abode of peace, for it is the abode of purity. He was wise who said—"Would you insure your houses by the best policy of insurance? Then turn them into churches, and they shall be taken under the special protection of Him who keeps Israel," and that is done where the Bible is paramount.†

\* Deut. vi. 6, 7.

† See M. Henry "On Family Religion."

With these influences in operation, then, Home may be likened to a great moral factory. A complicated machinery is there at work. Powers of various kinds, all conspiring to one great result, are put forth. A watchful eye observes the whole, and one mind presides. There may be collisions or jarrings from time to time, but, on the whole, the operation is harmonious, and the results are precious. A nation is just what its homes make it—rich in virtue or sunk in vice—distinguished among the peoples like Britain, or degraded and crushed like Italy, or Spain, or Portugal, in Europe, and the Southern sections of America, in the New World.

But the importance which attaches to Home and its constitution may appear from another point of view. What can the church or what can the school accomplish, if home be dis-tempered and disorganized? The lessons of the pulpit and the desk, however wholesome or direct, are far more than counterbalanced by the influence of home, if evil be ascendant there. The example of one father or one mother will do more to propagate iniquity than ten teachers could easily counteract—a truth which is exemplified from day to day in the homes where sin is triumphant. We have known one memorable case where a father's very wickedness was believed to have driven a son to the Rock that is higher than we. Broken and crushed in heart, he could find neither remedy nor refuge till he sought it in a Saviour. But that case is rare—it is almost solitary; and the principle of imitation alone necessarily leads to results which are disastrous. Who has not noticed the power of that principle operating in earliest childhood? Implanted in man for the wisest purposes, to teach, to guide, and make us wise, it may be perverted, like every other good gift, to hasten our moral



degradation ; and we accordingly see that the children of thieves grow up in dishonesty, the children of drunkards become drunkards, all by a law as unchanging as that which causes the brood of a vulture to be vultures. A parent's word is law, a parent's practice is more than law—it is both law and model to a child by the very appointment of God, and we thus read, often in a lurid light, both the blessedness and the misery which are in a parent's power according as the domestic constitution is kept inviolate or outraged. “Family education and order,” said one of the wisest of men, “are some of the chief means of grace. If these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual ; if these be duly maintained, all the means of grace are likely to prosper and be successful.” It is thus that human wisdom re-echoes the divine, and proclaims the necessity of training up a child in the way in which he should go ; and to fit parents for doing so with calmness and consistency, the heart should be kept at peace with God : the conscience should be pure : the life should be holy : the affections warm. Counsels are then the words of the wise ; they are goads.

#### EXAMPLES.

Many examples might be cited to illustrate these general truths.—In South Carolina, a Christian mother and widow, at the age of seventy-six, determined to gather all her living descendants around her once more ere she passed away from among them. They came on an appointed day, and her eldest son, a minister of the gospel, opened the meeting of the party with devotion. The number assembled was found to be eighty-five. Forty-four of these had arrived at maturity, of whom forty-three professed to be followers of the Lamb. The

youngest son, who was also a minister of religion, closed the business of a memorable day as the eldest had begun it, and surely, such an example very vividly illustrates the wholesome power of the domestic constitution. When the wisdom of God directs it, and the fear of God presides, the influence of home is salutary indeed. It is a living fountain sending forth fertilising streams, and all around it, the scene is made green and goodly by its influence. From one stem, in this case, forty-three members of Christ's Church had sprung, and had these three-and-forty told their secret history, it might have appeared that from their aged relative, as the means, all that led to such blessings had been derived.

But beneficent and blessed as are the divine arrangements regarding the family constitution, there are whole tribes and kingdoms to whom Home is unknown, and men are there, in consequence, engaged in vainly chasing the wind. The opinion has been hazarded that it was not, as is commonly supposed, the gulph which separated rank from rank that caused the first French Revolution, with all its murders and its crimes, so much as the complete disruption of family ties, the annihilation of the domestic constitution. And, whatever may be thought of that supposition, there are examples innumerable in the history of man, to illustrate the effects which follow the violation of God's law in this respect. What misery was occasioned in patriarchal times we need not again detail. What war has been piled upon war in all past ages need not be told. And in Eastern countries, in our own day, we see example upon example of the atrocities and the bloodshed which flow from the domestic constitution outraged. Fratricide, parenticide, infanticide, have not seldom been all crowded into one dark tragedy. Wholesale

butcheries have been perpetrated till palace and dungeon alike flowed with blood. Page after page of Indian history thus seems red with murder ; and the sore evil was at least fomented, if not produced, by the violence which was first done to Home and its constitution.

Would the families of India, then, be blessed ? Would they see not merely these massacres for ever over, but harmony and order taking their place ? Then, let the divine method, so often outraged, once more become man's standard and guide. Let parental authority, springing out of God's appointment, and directed by his will, regulate men's Homes. The God of all the families of the earth will bless them then. Peace, holiness, and preparation for heaven will reign, where a divine institution outraged now leads to hearts half-broken, to wives worse than widowed, and children worse than orphans.

## CHAPTER V.

## MARRIAGE.

The Banian Tree—Owenism—The Likeminded—Happy Unions—The Unhappy—Their Influence upon Home—Conversion after Marriage—The Effects, in Sorrow and in Joy—Philosophy at Fault—Examples—John Calvin—Hugo Grotius—Thomas Haliburton.

ON the banks of the Nerbudda, in Hindostan, there is a celebrated banian-tree, which has yielded shelter from an Indian sun to 7000 soldiers at once. Though now much reduced by the encroaching floods of the river, the principal stems, exclusive of the branches, still occupy a space of about 2000 feet in circumference. That kind of tree, it is well-known, is constantly originating new stems, while the central plant seems to be exempted from decay. The branches send forth pendent fibres from their extremities. When these fibres reach the ground they take root and become trunks, which in their turn produce others, and these others, as long as the earth supplies space and nourishment for such a progeny. Beneath these natural canopies, as graceful, some tell us, as the long-drawn aisles of a cathedral, the Hindoo delights to loiter and to dream away his torpid life. He deems such trees, with their outstretched arms and their unknown antiquity, the very emblems of his gods. Near them he builds his pagodas, and there the sleek Brahmin, or the emaciated Faquir, finds both a temple for worship and a shade for luxury.

Now, the banian-tree may be an emblem of marriage and of home. From one stem another springs, another and another, till the offshoots may be counted by hundreds, or lost in the distance of half the globe's circumference. Some, indeed, would check all this outspreading, as if the wisdom of man could roll back the sure decree of God. He was reputed wise who answered the question, "When should man marry?" by saying, "A young man not yet; an elderly man not at all." And Owen, the infidel, tried to extinguish or annihilate the marriage relation, by arguing against it as an outrage upon man's freedom or his social progress. "The single-family arrangements," he says, in contrasting them with Communism, "are hostile to the cultivation in children of any of the superior and ennobling qualities of human nature. They are trained by them to acquire all the most mean and ignorant selfish feelings that can be generated in the human character. The children within those dens of selfishness and hypocrisy, are taught to consider their own individual family their own world, and that it is the duty and interest of all within this little orb, to do whatever they can to promote the advantages of all the legitimate members of it. With these persons it is *my* house, *my* wife, *my* estate, *my* children; or *my* parents, *my* brother, *my* sister, and *our* houses and property. This family party is trained to consider it quite right, and a superior mode of acting, for each member of it to seek, by all fair means, as almost any means except direct robbery are termed, to increase the wealth, honour, and privileges of the family, and every individual member of it."\*

Such is the Socialist's advocacy of his own theory by caricaturing the Divine institution, where souls are

\* See "Boardman's Bible in the Family," page 17.

knit together, as if by God's own hand—"for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; to love and to cherish, till death do us part." But in truth, to marriage as their terminus many of the arrangements of home are unconsciously pointed. The moral banian—a household—reproduces itself in spite of our philosophers, and the happiness or the misery of Home is hence promoted by a necessary law.

This being the case, then, how needful is it to enter on the married state, according to God's appointed order! Surely the parties should be one in spirit, in heart, and aim, ere they be made one by His ordinance. Here, if ever, a wisdom more than human is needed, ere a relation be formed, upon which results inexpressible are suspended. And yet, how seldom does it happen, that God is consulted or his guidance asked! How rare "the Bride's Prayer,"—

"To Thee, O God, I turn,  
Even in this hour of solemn happiness,  
Beseeching Thee from thy bright dwelling-place,  
The glad abode of peace on high, to look  
Down on thy trembling handmaid!"

Were we to visit the abodes even of Christian men, and had we a right to inquire into this subject, it might be found that passion, cupidity, casualty, or caprice, rather than aught purely Christian, had decided the union of two immortal beings, whose reciprocal influence was to affect the destinies of both for ever—nay, not merely of both, but of all the immortal beings who might spring from their union.

And of course, when the parties are actually united, the Home which they inhabit must take its character from their own. Are they ungodly—that is, has the true God never yet received the homage of their heart? Is he not honoured,

worshipped, thanked? Has their union been formed, and are their pleasures sought, independent of Him on whom they hang for every breath they draw? Then their home may be one of splendour or one of squalor. It may be like a temple of Mammon, or a den of hard-driven drudges, but in either case, it is a home of misery because God is not feared. Their union should have made them blessed, but just in proportion as they pervert what should assimilate earth to heaven, do they treasure up misery, or fill a bitter cup which they must also drain. We here touch the focal point—the fountain-head of a thousand griefs.\*

On the other hand, however, Is God honoured by the married pair? Have they sought his blessing and his guidance, not merely by a priestly or a superstitious ceremony, but with the heart and soul? Then peace will make its abode with them. The laugh, the tear, the joy, the sorrow, will be all in common. Trials may come, and crowds of crosses. The wife and mother, for example, may know how true it is that the very first step, on leaving the paternal roof to cross the threshold of her own new home,

“Made April of her tender eyes;”

that is, she wept to take the very course on which her heart was bent. But still, where the wisdom of God has been consulted, and when He gives the grace which is needed for the married state, the blessedness of life is doubled—such souls understand why the relation which knits them together

\* “Remember Lot. Remember how he married. Remember what religious advantages he lost (by choosing Sodom for a home), in what company he placed his rising family—what ruinous disasters engulfed or scattered them—what infamy blackens their reputation, and in what ominous silence the Scriptures omit all notice of his death! Parents! Remember Lot!”—“The Dwellings of the Righteous,” by Rev. W. B. Mackenzie, Chap. iv.

was selected by the Saviour as an emblem of His own union to the saved, or of their union to Him. The husband is there "the head of the wife," whom he "cherishes as his own flesh." "One flesh," according to the Divine appointment, they are "one spirit with the Lord" by grace, and blessed in Him yet more than in each other. They take sweet counsel together, and the countless ties which unite them become stronger and stronger as years roll away. Unwise relatives, indeed, or those whom a wife has perhaps supplanted, may be tempted to create dispeace. This and other causes may occasion a transient cloud amid the general sunshine, or waves amid the general calm; but, on the whole, the heavenly wisdom guides, and the heavenly blessedness is enjoyed, when God is the Author of a union. He meant it to double our happiness, and it often does far more.

Further, there is much in the Word of God to warn us on the subject of marriage, if men would be warned. No one who thinks of the closeness of that relation, on the one hand, and the solemn obligations of God's truth, upon the other, will deny that a Christian should not be yoked with an unbeliever. Though we had no examples to quote of the sad effects of an opposite course, the Scriptures are explicit on the subject. When the Hebrews, for example, had got possession of Canaan, they were solemnly warned not to contract marriages with the remnants of the nations,\* and should that warning be slighted, they were told that the idolators would "be snares and traps to them, and scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes." Now, who has not seen all that, in spirit, realised in connexion with

\* Josh. xxxiii. 12, 13.



marriage? Godliness has been quenched. All that once gave promise of blessed days to come has been rudely nipt, and the soul which once seemed not far from the kingdom of heaven has hurried along the broad road, ensnared or ruined by the object of a misplaced affection. Few sights are more sad than to witness this decay and extinction of early piety, amid scenes which should have fostered and matured it—to see the husband searing the conscience of a wife, or a wife, like Jezebel, deadening that of her husband—and, like the meeting of two fires, just rendering the moral devastation more complete. Surely such things rank among the saddest of all moral spectacles—they have turned many a home into a sepulchre for souls.\*

But further still: it sometimes happens that parties who have been united while the Great God was unknown, are afterwards convinced of their sin and their folly in taking such a step. Or one of them, for example the wife, may be brought to welcome a Saviour, while the other still lives as the world does—unthinking, and unsaved. Now, there is often sorrow upon sorrow in such homes; the misery of being unequally yoked becomes poignant or even crushing there. In spite of the Divine prohibition, the husband is “bitter against the wife,” and “the star which is called Wormwood” is ascendant in her lot. True, the good Lord has graciously made provision for comfort, even when that sore misery has come. “What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or

\* We never knew of a marriage but one broken off purely on religious grounds. After the settlements were drafted, that was done upon a further explanation of religious views. And fifteen years thereafter, the objecting party could still ratify the deed. Where God is not feared, His blessing cannot be expected, and that conviction was felt and acted on.

how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"\* That, and the "chaste conversation coupled with fear," of another apostle,† may foster the hope of winning the wanderer, or captivating one whom no other power could subdue. This, however, holds out no encouragement to form this solemn relation *in the hope* of winning the lost. The Scriptures speak of those who are united, not of those who *design to be so*. In the former case, the blessing of God may be expected—in the latter, it cannot come, unless he could bless the neglect of his own revealed will, or smile on those who do evil that good may come.

Again, philosophy has ventured upon some dicta regarding marriage, which are not always true. Lord Bacon, for example, has said that "a wife and children are impediments to great enterprises, whether in the way of virtue or of wickedness;" but many facts are upon record which shew that this opinion needs to be largely modified. The husband and the father has reasons for putting forth energy, for embarking in high enterprises, or displaying the great and the generous in conduct, which other men have not—his Home, if the mind of God preside there, may be the nursery of all that is glowing in affection, or benevolent in purpose, or noble in deed. The intercourse of husband with wife, and of brothers with sisters, develops and matures the whole of our moral nature, and it were, therefore, to impeach the wisdom of the domestic constitution to regard the married relation as hostile to the generous, the benevolent, or the great in action. The conjugal, the parental, and the filial ties form a threefold cord, which is not easily broken, and which binds men at least to attempt whatever man can achieve. If to

\* 1 Cor. vii. 16.

† 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2.

all this we add the wisdom and experience which such relations are fitted to impart, we cannot but regard the circle of Home as favourable to noble and intrepid deeds. He who made Home what it is, and who proclaims marriage to be honourable in all, has also made sure that from that fountain much that is lovely and of good report shall flow. The intertwining of heart with heart necessitates such things, as it certainly forms one of the most exquisite joys of life.

"The braided roots that bind  
The towering cedar to the rock"

"do not constitute a stronger tie than that which binds a father and a husband to what is honourable, and upright, and pure.

But we should glance at another aspect of married life. When it begins in mere earth-born affection, it will speedily decay like all earthly things. There is no love infallibly lasting but love in Christ, and a thousand things tend to destroy our merely mortal ties. Beauty fades. Attempts to please diminish. Estrangement creeps over one party or both. It is not in human nature to love the unlovely—and hence, coldness, neglect, alienation, followed by moroseness and strife, constitute the married history of not a few—

"Another's sin is quickly made the plea  
Of my neglected duty"—

and a life of mutual crimination is certain to ensue. In all its bearings, then, we see what blessedness is wrapt up for man in the ordinance of marriage when God's mind directs it—what sorrow when His mind is set aside. It may double man's happiness or destroy it; it may soothe his grief or augment it; it may turn his weakness into strength, or prostrate all his powers; it may diffuse somewhat of the

bloom and the blessedness of untainted Eden, or supersede all felicity by anguish, according as the will of God is consulted or ignored.

And we thus learn how much of the blessedness of Home depends upon the spirit in which men enter into marriage. It should be the union of two souls who are already one in Christ, and where that is not the case, a foundation is laid for sorrow rather than for joy. The Saviour consecrated marriage when he cleared it alike from Jewish and Gentile corruptions, for as he found it debased, so he gave it its proper place among the ordinances of God. It has been said, that "with the Athenians, woman was merely the household drudge, incapable of rational intercourse and friendship. The fact that a large proportion of female children are destroyed in China tells its own revolting tale. 'Here, wolf, take thy lamb,' is said to have been the old Russian formula of marriage . . . and the Mussulman idea is that women have no souls."\* But the Saviour rectified all that: he gave to woman her proper place, and to marriage its proper character—and no man who has studied that subject in the light of eternal truth, can too urgently proclaim that half the world's woes and more may be traced to the abuse or the perversion of marriage. "He that marrieth, let him marry in the Lord," is the heavenly injunction. Wherever it is not obeyed there is sin, and where there is sin so radical, can there be a blessing?

But the general maxims which are commonly prescribed to regulate marriage it is not our purpose to detail. In broad and general terms it may be asserted, that the most dutiful son becomes the best husband and father, the most

\* Dr Harris in "Patriarchy," p. 240.

dutiful daughter the best wife and mother ; and where duty is directed by Christian principle, a true foundation is laid for as much happiness as man need expect in a world where he is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.

#### EXAMPLES.

The marriage of Calvin, and his views regarding it, may help to illustrate this subject. Devoted to the Reformation, he was long reluctant to enter into the state of wedlock. Importuned, however, by his friends, he at length consented, and more than one of them were employed to aid him in procuring a helpmate. In writing on the subject to his friend William Farell, Calvin says, "Remember what I especially desire to meet with in a wife. I am not, you know, of the number of those inconsiderate lovers who adore even the faults of the woman who charms them. I could be pleased only with a lady who is sweet, chaste, modest, economical, patient, and careful of her husband's health. Has she of whom you have spoken to me these qualities? Then come with her . . . . if not, let us say no more on the subject." On another occasion Calvin wrote to the same friend—"There has been named to me a young lady, rich, of noble birth, and whose dowry surpasses all I could desire. . . . I think," he adds, "she is too proud of her birth and of her education,"—and though Calvin was importuned by friend after friend to enter into that union, the plan was abandoned—he "congratulated himself on not marrying a lady who, with a large fortune, was far from possessing the requisite simplicity and humility."

Another proposal was also broken off, though from a different cause. Ere Calvin was finally committed, something

unchristian in the lady's character transpired, and he resolved to continue single. At Strasbourg, however, he found a congenial partner in Idelette de Bure, the widow of an Anabaptist. She was possessed of no attractions but her piety. She had a living faith, had suffered persecution for the truth—and the Reformer never had reason to repent his choice. His married life, however, was brief, for Idelette was soon summoned away from her husband and this world; but the record of her dying hours enables us to see how suitable she was as a wife to Calvin, and how tender, how compassionate, and Christian he was as a husband to her.

Again, upon the Rhine, not very far from Dort, the traveller's attention is attracted by the hoary remains of a castle which carries the scars of many centuries. About two hundred and fifty years ago, it was the scene of an adventure which shews, along with a thousand similar transactions, how closely two persons may be linked by the strong ordinance of God. Hugo Grotius, one of the most learned and accomplished men of his day, was imprisoned in that fortress. He had adopted sentiments in religion which were not popular in Holland, his native land, and that and other causes brought him into trouble. Hitherto he had been greatly honoured, and held some of the highest offices in the State, but that Castle of Luvestein had now become his home—he was sentenced to imprisonment there for life. Such a doom, however, was more than his wife could bear for her husband, and after having been about eighteen months immured, he escaped by her heroic devotedness, rendered inventive by affection, and resolute as womanhood can be, when its energies are concentrated upon some cherished object.

As a student, Grotius had his books frequently conveyed into the castle in a chest, and after that practice had been continued long enough to lull suspicion, he was himself carried out instead of his books. His wife presided with intense anxiety over every stage of that critical operation, and as her own liberty was imperilled by the measure, she deserves to be ranked among the women who saved the lives of their husbands at the risk of their own. Like the case of that Queen of England who sucked the poison from her husband's wound, and put her own life in jeopardy for his, the case of Grotius tells how completely two may be made one — actually identified by that ordinance of God which stands second among all that he has given for the guidance, or the happiness of man.

But on the subject of marriage and its influence upon Home, it is more to our purpose to select some purely Christian model, and we instance the case of a Scottish worthy—the Reverend Thomas Haliburton.

When he was in circumstances which permitted him to marry, his firm purpose was to be guided, in a measure so solemn, by heavenly wisdom alone. He was determined at the outset “not to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever,” and therefore went first to God for direction. No worldly advantages were permitted to warp him from that resolution.\* As a Christian, Haliburton would be a Christian always, and surely never more than in that transaction on which so much of his blessedness in time and for ever depended. He knew that marriage was ordained by God to promote man's happiness, but he also knew that man often perverts it to aug-

\* The Rev. Samuel Walker, of Truro, declined a matrimonial alliance because he discovered that the lady possessed £10,000.

ment his misery; and he tried to avoid that rock in the step which was second in importance only to that by which he would pass up to his eternal home. Haliburton, in short, set the Lord before him, and was jealous over all wisdom except that which comes from above.

He had been disappointed in one case, and was rendered more circumspect in the next proposal, which ended in his marriage. He tested his own spiritual condition, to ascertain whether he had any ground to expect a real blessing from his God. Solemnised by what is unquestionably momentous, however the frivolous may pervert it, this man of God would not move without the pillar of cloud or of fire before him, and he was blessed as all will be who wait upon the Lord for guidance. He might be cast down to-day, but hope brightened to-morrow; difficulties cleared away, for he tried to keep the lamp in his hand,\* and in due time, the appointed helpmates were united—they were blessed and made blessings to each other. Prayer preceded, prayer accompanied, and prayer followed all that Haliburton did, and parents and children together were thus made happy from on high.

Now the contrast between this good man's conduct, and that of many who name Christ's name, is sufficiently remarkable. He was prepared for the joys of Home, and they were copiously shed down upon him. He made his marriage a part of his religion, not something separate and distinct, and his union was one which his Lord would have graced by his presence, as he did the marriage at Cana. In a word, Haliburton adopted the course which the only wise God had prescribed, and marriage was to him, not what superstition

\* Psalm cxix. 105.



makes it on the one hand, a Sacrament, nor what worldliness makes it on the other, scarcely a decent ceremonial, but what the Word of God makes it, a source of solemn thoughts and of satisfying blessedness. It gladdened all the days of Haliburton, as the palm-trees and the water of Elim gladdened the Hebrews in the desert. He sought the Lord in the matter—the Lord heard—and that man's joy was both heart-deep and life-long.—It would be ever so, did men solemnly consult the Counsellor in the most momentous step of mortal life, next to the hour which closes it.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE FATHER AT HOME.

The Pulse—Its varieties—Sin in our Homes—Its varieties—A Father's place and functions—His power—When Teaching should commence—The Prophet of Home—The Priest—The King—The extent of a Father's rule—The rod—Sowing in tears—Severity—Eli, a warning—The "Jealous God"—Princes wandering where there is no way—Guiding the young to Christ—Examples—President Edwards—Another—Oliver Cromwell.

WHEN an inexperienced hand is placed upon the pulse at the wrist, only the more general characters of its beating can be detected. It may be quick, or it may be slow ; it may be regular, or it may be intermittent ; but these are nearly the only distinctions which unskilled fingers can detect.

On the other hand, however, when a skilful practitioner feels the pulse, it is well-known that he can distinguish upwards of twenty different kinds, indicating as many different states of the body. Frequent, slow, intermittent, equal, regular, variable,—full, long, labouring, bounding, feeble,—hard, sharp, strong,—wiry, weak, soft, yielding,—quick, tardy,—large, small,\*—all these can be distinguished by a practised physician, and all these are helpful to him in dealing with the diseases with which he must grapple.

And who has not noticed that in the government or the training of a family, similar distinctions meet us among the dispositions of its members ? Their temperaments may vary

\* Isaac Taylor, in "Home Education."

as much as the contours of the human countenance, though one thing they all have in common, namely, a fallen, sinful nature. Amid endless diversities that much is identical, and often little more. Sin is thus encountered in forms as various as the number of inmates in a Home. It is ready to resist authority, or impose upon goodness; it resents restraint; it refuses to profit by the counsels of experience; and ignorance, rashness, waywardness, and folly often prevail, in spite of prayers, of lessons, and example. There are, indeed, some gentle natures fashioned for the quiet enjoyment of life, and they, from their youth upwards, seem to make Truth their pole-star, and Duty their delight. But, even in such cases, the Father of all may not be loved. There is affection felt and duty done to others; but the God of our mercies may all the while be forgotten.

But whatever be the component parts of Home, a father has to guide and fashion them according to the supreme wisdom embodied in the Scriptures. Placed at the centre of influence, and near the hearts of his children, he is to wield all his authority—an authority unmatched in the world—in training them for God. Long ere they can reason, or act as responsible beings, that training should commence, and ever onwards should whatever can repress the wrong or encourage the right be lovingly employed. Often amid these duties, the thought may occur, “Who is sufficient for these things?” and there may be times when the heart seems ready to faint and fail. But difficulty or danger to the creatures whom he loves, will just make a Christian father more circumspect, or more decided; he will watch for their souls like one who must give an account. By thought, word, and deed, he will try to get possession of the young heart for

God, and then sedulously lead it in all the ways in which youth should go. Spreading the sunshine of love over all that he does—except where sin turns his smile into a frown—and pointing often to the Father who is in heaven, or the Elder Brother beside the throne, the earthly father will try to stamp the impress of truth upon the heart, ere the world shall have steeled it by its godless power.

But this is too vague. As a father's words, his tones, and looks, are a law to his child, for which no other authority can fully compensate, the paternal influence begins with the dawn of perception. "When God places any man, solitary before, or only a son, at the head of a family, does he not say by such a step, 'I constitute you the trustee, the guide, the guardian of this part of mankind. All under the roof are your charge, and to you entrusted.' Now for what end? To be ruled or not? To be instructed or not? To be by your example and your precepts led to heaven or not? The negative in such cases is not merely monstrous—it is profane.\* . . . ." Amid all this, as we have already seen in passing, a father's functions may be regarded under three aspects :—

First, he is the Prophet of his Home. It is he that should both explain and enforce the Word of God. Childhood should repose without one doubt upon the word of an earthly parent, and that, preparatory to faith in the Word of a Father who is in heaven. From the earthly parent the first lessons of wisdom are learned, and they should commence as early as attention can be fixed ; not in formal tasks, or in scholastic phrases, but in the countless ways which intelligent affection can invent without effort, and employ without

\* Anderson on the "Domestic Constitution."—Part ii. sec. 5.

weariness,—nay, with delight. It may be a look, a word, a tone, a gesture,—it may be a flower, a star, a little bird, or any object within ken ; but all will be made to point in one direction, if the father really loves the soul of his child. Standing in God's place, that father will train for Him, and according to His Word. Whatever is less than that is error—perhaps it is rebellion—while it may end in ruin to the child. In a word, anarchy with misery, or order with happiness; self-will with sorrow, or God's will with the abundance of peace, are the lessons which a Christian father has to teach. What has God revealed ? What is written concerning man, concerning God, and concerning the way which leads to His favour ? All that will be imparted by the father-prophet as the young mind can receive it. By such a process, the God of all our families is honoured, while parents escape the doom of those who destroy their children's souls—sin is repressed, holiness promoted, and happiness on earth and for ever made as sure as man's endeavours can make it. True, that father may be laid in the dust before such seed can ripen into fruit ; but with his dying breath he may hope that He who gave the Word will bless it. He may trust that the acorn which he has planted will become an oak, and that, though many things may threaten to crush the germ, He whose promises are to us and to our children will fulfil them at the appointed time.

It may here be remarked that there are some note-worthy examples upon record, of men who have been involuntarily the prophets of Home in regard to the truth of God ; they have deferred to it, and taught it to their children while they disregarded it in their own conduct. The poet Burns is an instance. In cases not a few, that lofty genius but moral

wreck gave unequivocal symptoms of his scepticism, and we know from the sad history of his life, that he often trampled the truth of God in the dust. Yet, in one of his letters, he has recorded his purpose to have a much-loved son trained according to the Bible. He approved of the right, though he did the wrong, and longed to have his little ones taught the truths which their father questioned. Now his case is not solitary, and such examples light us far into the knowledge of a father's heart upon the one hand, and the beauty of truth upon the other. May we not see in them also, some rays of hope concerning that gifted yet grovelling man? The truth *touched* his soul.

But besides the office of a prophet to instruct, a father has, in *one* sense, the duties of a Priest to discharge. He cannot offer sacrifice—that has been done once for all—but he can point to the Lamb of God. He can imitate the Great Intercessor, and intercede for his little ones, or the Great Mediator, and “give God no rest” till Christ be formed in them the hope of glory—less than that is less than a Christian father's love. The case of Job, already quoted,\* illustrates this function of a father. Amid the birthday festivities of his sons and daughters, the patriarch trembled lest they should sin against God, and offered sacrifices, “according to the number of them all.” From day to day that practice was continued, and in the same spirit every father, who is also a Christian, will act. The mere suspicion that his children may have sinned, will urge that man towards the throne of God. Like the Great Intercessor who prayed for those whom God had given him out of the world, such a father will intercede for his household. Their names will be all upon his heart, and animated

\* Job i. 5.

by love as well as prompted by the truth of God, he will offer continually at least "the calves of his lips."

Of all the proofs of the sad effects of sin which meet us in the world, few are sadder than the fact that many parents never offer a single prayer for their children—many a child never heard his father or his mother pray. But unlike such fathers, the father-priest makes every fear and every case of waywardness, every joy and every sorrow, birthdays, burial-days, and all that happens in chequered family life, another and another errand to the throne. He casts himself upon the fatherhood of God, while sympathy for suffering and sorrow for sin combine to press on him the need of an Advocate alike for himself and his little ones. It is here that we and our children are placed under the Almighty shield, and here that we enter together upon that sacred domain which is at once hallowed and made safe by the blood of the Lamb. The father-priest on earth, guiding the young to the priest upon the throne, is the way to conduct them to glory—the house of the Lord for ever.

But besides the functions of prophet and of priest, a Christian father is also a King—a king unto God in the Home which shelters the objects of his loving care.

A family is often called the model of all government. The father is king; the children are the subjects; the Word of the King of kings is the statute-book, and as man was happy in Eden just as long as God's will was unchallenged law, our homes are happy just as long as fathers are obeyed in the Lord. The sceptre, we repeat, is love, but it is absolute nevertheless. The authority may be abused; the kingly office may degenerate into a despotism where man, not God, gives law. But that does not impair, or supersede the

divine arrangement that the father of a family shall be its king. Obedience is to be cordial, prompt, continual, for it is yielded to affection rather than mere authority or power. And it is to be given because the father wills it—not for reasons shewn to the child. The time for giving explanations on the one side, and understanding them upon the other, will come; but meanwhile submission and obedience are due to the father as the father; and it is the wise ordination of the Great Parent that all shall be done so promptly and so cordially that even the youngest child may learn, before it can utter the sentiment, that perfect freedom can be found only in perfect obedience. While a father looks upon his children as a portion of himself, and treats them accordingly, he and they *as one* are to be guided by God's Word; and thus is the happiness of all copiously provided for by the Holy One and the Just—his own all-wise government is repeated in miniature in every well-ruled home. The same principles preside; the same love animates; the same results, or glory to God and blessedness to man, are promoted, and a Christian father thus becomes a representative of God upon the earth. The little paradise has happiness restored.

By all this we just mean that the father of a family is in God's place to his children; he is to rule them as God would do. While guided by the supreme law, there is no appeal from his authority. As the first man had no superior and no guide but God alone, wise childhood has no superior and no guide but a father. Regulated by the Divine model, the government of God, Home is absolutely under the control of its head. He is responsible to God for the use of his power, and woe to the man who turns power into despotism, and control into oppression. But



wherever a father acts according to the mind of the just Judge of all, that father's will is the court of last appeal. His sceptre should be one of love, and upon the supposition that it will be so, the sweeping injunction is—"Children obey your parents *in all things*, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." While the father-king rules, in short, his word is law. He has transmitted to his children an entail of misery and disease, but he has in his possession an antidote to both—that word of the Lord which endureth for ever; and while imparting its lessons, he is to be honoured with all deference, and obeyed without a challenge. This is vital, it is essential—its absence is fraught with peril.

It is thus that the father of a family combines in his own person the offices of judge and counsel, of friend and patron—of prophet, priest, and king. In none of these relations is he independent. Looking upward, he has a heavenly Guide whom he must follow, and a heavenly tribunal where he must stand at last; looking downward, he sees his little ones waiting not merely for daily bread, but for example, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, and amid all this, the teacher is himself a learner. He has habits of self-government to acquire; he has to study himself in his child, and often read humbling lessons as he beholds his own waywardness and folly reproduced. Such experience may sometimes embitter his life, for, in spite of prayer, of warnings, and example, no dew may gather upon his fleece: the heavens may be as brass, and the earth as iron, amid all his efforts. But just the greater is his need to make them. His is a warfare in which there is no discharge, a harvest in which the reaping may seem both late and scanty; but that should not affect

his sowing : nay, he should sow beside all waters, he should embrace every opportunity both to learn and to teach ; and it may be his lot at last to return, bringing his sheaves with him. If he proceed in the right order, and first enthrone Christ in his heart, and then in his home, that father will be made a blessing. His influence and its effects may be long unperceived—like the labours of the coral insect—but like them also, they may at last appear in a beauty and a verdure which charm all eyes. \*

Or more : there can be little doubt that some fathers err on the side of undue severity. Though a father's power be absolute, it is not despotic ; though unchallengeable, it is not irresponsible. The Saviour's gentle treatment of his disciples while they were weak in the faith, and when he had many things to tell them which they could not bear, should be our model in dealing with children. There are, no doubt, cases of self-will, of precocious depravity, or determined opposition to what is right and good according to God's Word, which must be resolutely met. The emphatic prohibition repeated so often in the ten commandments—"Thou shalt not"—needs still to be pressed, from day to day, and it is blindfold sentiment, not intelligent principle, to withhold that prohibition wherever it is needed. Nay, that divine institution, the rod, may perhaps require to be employed

\* "It is not merely by speaking to children about spiritual things that you win them over. If that be all you do, it will accomplish nothing, less than nothing. It is the sentiments which they hear at home, it is the maxims which rule your daily conduct—the likings and dislikings which you express—the whole regulations of the household, in dress, and food, and furniture—the recreations you indulge—the company you keep—the style of your reading—the whole complexion of daily life—this creates the element in which your children are either growing in grace, and preparing for an eternity of glory—or they are learning to live without God, and to die without hope."—"Married Life," by Rev. W. B. Mackenzie, Chap. ix.

in such cases, and aught else were often cruelty. But, in general, the wild may be tamed, and the wayward subdued, if the counsels of God's Word be followed; and either to alienate the affections, or to chafe the spirit of the young when gentle measures would suffice, is an extreme which parents have sometimes lived to deplore. If correction were administered through tears—if a day, or even an hour, were allowed to intervene between the transgression and the punishment, home might in many a case be made more sunny, and neither the outbreak of passion nor the violation of paternal law would be witnessed so often as it is.

The case of Eli is often quoted upon this subject. If some err upon the side of undue severity, he transgressed by extreme indulgence. Gross sins were committed by his sons, whom he did not restrain; or if he seemed to do so, it was in a way so faint-hearted and feeble as to be utterly inadequate to the nature of the trespass. And we know the result—misery to the father, poverty and death to the sons—guilt which could not be atoned for, a family proscribed or outlawed from mercy through many generations, and woe piled upon woe till sire and son alike sank beneath the mass. It is a beacon warning us of misery and death at hand. It is a monument erected in perpetual memory of authority abused upon the one hand, and despised upon the other. The case proclaims aloud that when parents poison the souls of their children, or let others do so, that demands a sadder retribution than even the destruction of the body.

Nor was it otherwise in the case of David's home, when he forgot the principles which should constantly rule there. We read concerning one of his children, that "his

father had never displeased him at any time, saying, Wherefore hast thou done so?" And what was the result? If that principle of action was carried out among David's other children, what were the effects? Most sad. One of his sons was guilty of incest, and was, in revenge, murdered in cold blood by his brother. Next, that murderer rebelled against his father, and drove him, for a time, from his throne. Then the rebel himself was cut off by a violent death. Farther, a third son rebelled against David in his old age, and turned his home into a scene of melancholy confusion, of rivalry and strife, of plots and counterplots, till the heart sickens at such conduct under the roof of a man of God. Now all this proclaims, as if it were written on the face of the sky, the dire effects of parental indulgence. That father will most probably eat his bread in bitterness at last, who makes his own blind affection, and not the mind of God, his rule in the guidance of his home. The pampered favourite will become the fretting plague. The untamed spirit will wield a usurped authority, and, worst of all, conscience, alive at length, both to God's enactments and to man's neglect, will perhaps turn the father's eyes into a fountain of tears—his home into the abode of the heart-broken, his deathbed into a scene of gloomy retrospection, and death into twice the King of Terrors.

"I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."—Such is a solemn portion of the Word of God. Will fathers ponder it well? Some are startled by such an announcement, as if it were contrary at once to Jehovah's mercy and His justice. They assume that the word "visiting" necessarily means

death and eternal destruction, and upon that assumption they base objections to the truth. But it is a portion of the law of God notwithstanding, and in His holy providence He has placed it beyond dispute; it ranks among the absolute truths—the laws of His kingdom. He has acted upon it in the ages which are past; and we cannot look around us upon the haunts of busy men without seeing it exemplified, sometimes in fearful ways. Children dishonoured, beggared, diseased, dying, all in consequence of their father's guilt,—doomed to exile, or to ignominy, it may be from generation to generation, and never able any more to lift the head above the waves which break over it. Nay, more conspicuous still: men have been chased from their thrones because their power had been abused, and their children, or their children's children, who might in their turn have been crowned kings, have wandered where there was no way. Instead of a palace, their home has been some den or cave of the earth; and even when they could muster armies to fight for their crown-rights, a perpetual exile has still been their doom. Trace the history of the exiled Stuarts; mark their ineffectual struggles, their gleams of victory to be followed by dark defeats, and who, with an open Bible, may not read in these things the appointed results of the heartlessness of one member of that house,—the unprincipled sensuality of another,—the oppressions and apostacy of a third? The gathering cloud was long pent up, but it broke at last, and the discharge swept a dynasty away.

It is thus, then—without travelling to the land of Ham, and other historical examples—it is thus that we see how truly the Holy One is “a jealous God.” He protests, in a way more emphatic than thunder, against the neglect of fatherly duty

on the one hand, and of filial obligation upon the other. The offence and the chastisement run on together, like a stream widening and deepening as it flows, till families once conspicuous wither, dwindle, die,—or, if the line be continued, they are often only the objects of compassion—pensioners, paupers, abjects.

But these remarks upon the duties of a father would be singularly lame and impotent did they contain no reference to the great terminus of all fatherly influence, namely, bringing the young to the Saviour. Whatever falls short of that, really frustrates the great end of life ; and were that result more commonly aimed at, fatherly duty in other respects would both be more easy and more successful. The parents who brought their children of old to the Saviour are a model here, and his reception of them is an encouragement. The scene is one of the most striking that the mind can rest upon. On the one hand is helpless infancy ; on the other is Omnipotence—God with us. On the one hand is parental yearning seeking the happiness of the helpless ; on the other is the Sun and the Shield who can give both grace and glory ;—and to copy that picture, to repeat that scene, should be the endeavour unto prayer of every loving father. There are fathers who watch over the *bodies* of their children, and do their duty to them with affectionate care, who wisely consider this world's interests, and train their children for it, but who neglect the *soul*, its interests, and welfare. It is starved, or left for dead, while all the concerns of earth are scrupulously arranged. Now such parents take the place, and act the part, of the disciples who would have hindered affection from bringing the objects of its solicitude to Christ—they impede instead of promoting

the happiness of the young. But let fathers learn to put that first which God puts first, and then in the dwellings of the righteous the melody of joy and of health will be heard. The father will be blessed in his child, and the child in his father ; while both of them rejoice in the favour of their God on high.

It is true, many a father has unfitted himself for the duties which have just been described. He is living in sin. He is ignorant. God's truth is unknown. Or the man is indolent. Duty is felt to be irksome, and even the love of his little ones can neither rouse his conscience nor draw forth exertion. As the victim of some ascendant sin or some tyrant passion, that father is neglecting all that is sacred in duty and precious in souls. But none of these things can exempt or excuse him. He is bound by a primary law—the law of his God—to train his child aright. Such training involves the moral welfare of both parent and child, and to plead inability as an excuse for neglect, is just to make one sin the vindication of another.

## EXAMPLES.

The remark is proverbial, that grace is not hereditary. It cannot be transmitted from father to son like a name, or an earthly inheritance. Though there be truth in Matthew Henry's quaint remark, that "a family altar may be the best entail," it is no less true that that entail may be broken by some ungodly descendant.

There are examples, however, in the history of the Church, where grace has descended from father to son, in a direct and an unbroken line, even far beyond the third or the fourth generation. The case of President Edwards has often

been referred to in illustration of this truth.\* Ranking as he did among the highest and purest of intellects, he was not less conspicuous for godliness than for gifts. But what is more, he could count his descent through a great-great-grandfather, a great-grandfather, a grandfather, and a father who were all conspicuous for godliness,—some of them for suffering in the cause of truth, and all of them for making the Word of God their charter and their chart in life. Nor was the chain broken in the case of Edwards himself. It passed on to his descendants. Father and son in succession continued to enthrone God's truth in the heart as the rule of their life. In this manner, six generations at least have served God in the gospel of His Son; and the world has seen in *one* example what grace and truth can do when fathers seek them for their children, or honour the Spirit of Wisdom as the Teacher at once of parent and of child. Is man faithful? So is God. Is man perverse? Then, "with the froward, God shews himself froward." Fathers reap as they have sown. As they measure, it is meted to them again; while there are cases not a few in which the gray hairs even of a godly parent have been brought in sorrow to the grave by the outbreak of ungodliness, that may often be traced to the neglect, the mismanagement, or the unwisdom of the father.

But we have seen a father's influence put forth in a very different way. Death had invaded his home, and child after child was carried to the narrow house. That father felt and confessed the fear that he would yet be left alone in the world, though his family had been twelve in number. After one of the desolating blows, the surviving remnant resolved, with their mother, to erect a

\* Anderson's "Domestic Constitution," Part I., sec. 6.



family altar, and nightly to gather round it, there to bow before Him whose arrows flew so fast, and struck so fatally. But was the father among that worshipping group? Did he lead their devotions? Did he instruct them to "hear the rod?" Did he warn them to prepare for what he feared was coming, and what actually came, without very long delay, to other two? Ah, no; but in various ways he shewed that his heart was still untouched. The annoyance which he occasioned to the little worshipping group was akin to persecution—he made it painfully plain that he cared not how soon the family altar became a neglected ruin.—Such is the power of the world. It sours even a father's nature: it turns the protector into a persecutor, and instead of acting for God at the head of a home, such fathers repress, deaden, and destroy the souls of their children.

Scarcely could we find a better illustration of a father's duty than occurred in the home of Oliver Cromwell. He has long been an incomprehensible riddle to men. Some have deemed him an arch-hypocrite, and others an arch-fanatic. Many have reckoned him a deep deceiver, who practised deception so long that he became at last the dupe of his own lie. But, in truth, all such verdicts upon Cromwell are the dictates of ignorance in some, of incompetency in others. Judged by the ordinary standards, by which alone worldly politicians and as worldly historians *can* judge, the Protector is one of the greatest mysteries of all time. But tried by the truth of God, or seen in the light which it sheds, Cromwell is really no mystery at all. His true nature is seen in his home, where he was beloved as few have ever been. One who has profoundly fathomed his character, and who has done full justice to the Puritan, tells us that his

whole family, and all beneath his roof, up to his wife and venerable mother, clung to him with a tender affection—all lived with him in singular harmony, “as noble a household as any in this our land of noble households.”\* Their love was an enthusiasm, their attachment a passion. Piety and affection, Christian grace and household virtue, knit them all together. If Cromwell was a partaker in one great crime—though multitudes deny that it was a crime at all—he fell as David did—as Peter did—as Cranmer did, and many more; but in all the relations of life, as the ruler of a great kingdom, and the head of a household, Oliver Cromwell stands insulated—all but alone, noble, if not royal, a God-made king, a Christian.

\* Myers’ “Lectures on Great Men.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE MOTHER AT HOME.

The Morning and the Evening Star—Scripture—The Reign of Love—Responsibility—Weak Things confounding the Mighty—A Mother's Province—Her Honour—The Apollo—The Laocœon—Mingled Anguish and Joy—Godless Mothers—Worldly Mothers—Hyena Mothers—Ambitious Mothers—Ostrich Mothers—Godly Mothers—The Countess of Carberry—A Mother's Grief—Hope—A Time for Repentance—The Motherless—Examples—Alfred the Great—The Poet Gray—Dr Doddridge—Lord Bacon—Sir Isaac Newton.

It is true to nature, although it be expressed in a figurative form, that a mother is both the morning and the evening star of life. The light of her eye is always the first to rise, and often the last to set upon man's day of trial. She wields a power more decisive far than syllogisms in argument, or courts of last appeal in authority. Nay, in cases not a few, where there has been no fear of God before the eyes of the young—where His love has been unfelt and His law outraged, a mother's affection or her tremulous tenderness has held transgressors by the heartstrings, and been the means of leading them back to virtue and to God.

At the outset of this section, we are warned by the faithful and the true Witness, in many portions of His Word, that the mother, for the most part, decides the character of the son. For example, was the life of Samuel long and devout? Was he early a holy child, and honoured to work for God? That stands connected with the significant fact, that the mother of that boy had said—"As long as he liveth,

he shall be lent to the Lord." The surrender of that believing mother's heart was ratified in heaven, and proved a blessing to her as well as to succeeding generations.

On the other hand, was Rehoboam a foolish king? Did his conduct at length rend his kingdom in twain? The Word of God explains these things by saying, "His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess." That is, she was an Idolater, and he was habituated to idolatry and its maxims in youth. Rehoboam, on a throne, was hence prepared to be a scourge to his kingdom.

Or did Amaziah "do that which was right in the sight of the Lord?" Then his mother is said to have been of Jerusalem. She was trained there in the truth, and, like other Jewish mothers who had felt its power, she succeeded in planting that truth in the heart of her son.

Or farther. The name of Hezekiah is closely linked with that of his mother, Abi. The same is true of Josiah, of Jehoiakin, and others, both wicked and righteous, among the kings of the Jews; and if we are to learn, not merely from what the Scriptures say, but often also from the connexion in which they say it, there are both warnings and encouragements contained in such brief allusions to a mother's ascendancy and power.

The secret of her influence is this—A mother's reign is pre-eminently one of love—

"Here woman reigns; the mother, daughter, wife,  
Strew with fresh flowers the narrow vale of life.  
In the calm heaven of her delightful eye,  
An angel guard of loves and graces lie."

With such power for her sceptre, she can sway and mould; she can repress and encourage; she can build up or destroy

—next to Omnipotence hers is the strongest moral influence known upon earth. By her quick intuition she is

"Ready to detect  
The latent seeds of evil: to encourage  
All better tastes and feelings, and to fling  
So bright a radiance o'er a life of virtue  
That children seek it as God's glorious gift."

As the prophet spread himself upon the body of the dead child, applying limb to limb till life returned, a mother can take man's whole nature under her control. She thus becomes what she has been called, "The Divinity of Infancy." Her smile is its sunshine, her word its mildest law, until sin and the world have steeled the heart. She can shower around her the most genial of all influences, and from the time when she first laps her little one in Elysium by clasping him to her bosom—"its first paradise"—to the moment when that child is independent of her aid, or perhaps, like Washington, directs the destinies of millions, her smile, her word, her wish is an inspiring force. A sentence of encouragement or praise is a joy for a day. It spreads light upon all faces, and renders a mother's power more and more charm-like, as surely as ceaseless accusing, rebuking, and correcting, chafes, sours, and disgusts. So intense is her power, that the mere remembrance of a praying mother's hand, laid on the head in infancy, has held back a son from guilt when passion had waxed strong. By its gentle violence on the side of what is good and true, it has prompted the words—

"O say, amid the wilderness of life,  
What bosom would have throb'd like thine for me?  
Who would have smiled responsive? Who in grief  
Would ere have felt, or, feeling, grieved like thee?"

The plastic power which is thus placed in a mother's hands,

no doubt, involves a tremendous responsibility, but when guided by heavenly wisdom for heavenly ends, it can do every thing but make us new creatures in Christ. Science has sometimes tried to teach us that if a pebble be cast into the sea on any shore, the effects are felt, though not perceived by man, over the whole area of the ocean. Or, more wonderful still, science has tried to shew that the effects of all the sounds ever uttered by man or beast, or caused by inanimate things, are still floating in the air: its present state is just the aggregate result of all these sounds; and if these things be true, they furnish an emblem of the effects produced by a mother's power—effects which stretch into eternity, and operate there for ever, in sorrow or in joy. Every word, or every look is a power, as every drop augments the flood.

True, a mother's look, a smile, or word may seem small and insignificant, yet who that reflects will acquiesce in the opinion?—Is it little to fashion an immortal spirit after a heavenly model? Is it a little thing to develop infant powers, and bring to light all that seems hidden in the soul, to train the ear by sweet sounds, the eye by lovely colours? Is it a little thing to teach the use of what is, perhaps, the most wondrous gift of God, next to existence and a Saviour, namely, language, and form what is emphatically called our mother tongue? Is it a little thing to notice the first articulate utterance, or rather to create and call it forth? Is it little, in short, to get from God an immortal being, not merely in a state of nonage, but utterly helpless, so that, if forsaken, it would hasten to die, and to stamp on it the love of the noble, the heavenly, the pure, as a Christian mother will ever seek to do? Were things seen in the light of eternity, or judged

by the standard of the sanctuary, these would seem engrossments enough for the most intense activity, or gratification enough for the most soaring ambition—and all these are placed by God in the hands of a mother. All that influence she may wield, if only she take the will of God to guide her, and lean upon His power to sustain.

"The glow-worm, though itself unseen,  
Glad with the lustre of its tiny lamp  
Its little neighbourhood of blade and flower;"

and in like manner, the humblest Christian mother may radiate joy around her. "Her face is the first object on which her child's wandering eye learns complacently to settle: her tones lull it to repose, and mingle with its dreams—with its being. Her eye discourses with its infant mind, while yet words are to it mere inarticulate sounds. Her every movement gives to it a new sensation. And thus, at the moment of its birth, its education begins, and from that moment never knows a pause." \*

Now, when reason and conscience control this ascendancy, and not mere blind affection, the blessings are unspeakable. Such a mother will enter into her little one's sports, yet repress his waywardness—will tenderly anticipate every want, or screen the opening bud, yet judiciously incline or mould the whole to favour the pure and the good. The glaring errors which one often witnesses on the part of mothers in their flattering, their pampering, their neglecting their children, lessen our wonder when we see home unhappy.† But that does not diminish a mother's power, whether it be wielded for good or for ill.

\* See "Patriarchy," by Dr Harris, p. 200. There are many exquisitely beautiful allusions to a mother's power scattered throughout that volume.

† See examples in Abbot's "Mother at Home," Chap. v.

It is beautiful exceedingly to gaze upon the Apollo Belvedere ; and, standing before that wonderful creation, one feels awed by the genius which evoked such loveliness from marble. Before the statue of Laocoon, one is scarcely less rivetted, so completely do the agonising father, and his agonised boys, tell of the depth, the reality, and the hopelessness of their woe. And yet what are these, what are all the effects produced by mortal power, or taste, or skill, compared with the moulding of an immortal spirit ? It may seem a paltry power, or a paltry achievement ; but “as the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake,” that power stirs unfathomed depths, and spreads unending influences—the waves which it diffuses reach no shore for ever. Napoleon Bonaparte once asked a lady what France required for the right education of its youth—and the answer was as profound as it was laconic, “Mothers.” How different would the history of that noble country have been had mothers indeed abounded there !

It thus appears, without further explanations, that nearly all depends upon the mother in regard to the character and the effects of home. Her love is sunshine, her grief is like fire to wax. Neither the Christian ministry, with all that is hallowing in it, nor schools, nor universities, nor paternal authority can compete with her in plastic power. There may be more of the glare of publicity in other scenes, but the silent, ceaseless, dewy influence of a mother's eye, and voice, and love is unrivalled upon earth. But we repeat it, —a power so transcendant involves a responsibility which is unspeakable ; and the mother who is alive to that will watch unto prayer for ways to do good. Has a death happened in her home ? Then how deep or how thrilling are the lessons



which it teaches through her weeping eye and tender tones ! Has some member of the family been restored to health ? Then how full is her heart, how numerous are her lessons concerning the loving-kindness of the Lord ! That is Christian religion displayed by a Christian mother ; and she who watches thus will have souls for her hire.\*

No doubt, the deepest love of a mother is not seldom trod upon by the turbulent and the licentious. Her highest influence may be all set at nought, and then her sorrow and her suffering are such as a stranger cannot comprehend. Withal, however, the influence of a godly mother spreads like daylight over life ; it checks where it cannot wholly rescue ; it hampers when it cannot save. " My mother would talk to me, and weep as she talked," said a bold sinner. " I flung out of the house with an oath, but wept, too, when I got into the street. Sympathy is the powerful engine of a mother. I was desperate. I would go on board a privateer, but there are soft moments to such desperadoes. . . . " — " Weeds deadly as the aconite" may thus grow in spite of utmost care, and then the heart may sometimes feel as if it would like to break. But as her reward, each mother can take one or more of the great human family under her control. When nature is most pliable and most easily impressed, she can impress it so well that the sum of all the good which exists at any given time may be viewed as the result of all the halowing influences put forth by the mothers of the age. To increase the number of such mothers

\* We knew a father who carried his son to the summit of a hill to shew him a noble prospect, and he knelt down with him in the centre of that glory to thank a heavenly Father for it and for all. We know some friends who went to visit a remarkable scene. They were so much struck that they knelt down upon the spot and praised. Now that is Christianity embodied in life and action.

the Word of God is both ample and explicit in its details. The picture drawn in the last section of the book of Proverbs should be copied in every line, nay, in every touch of the heavenly pencil, by every mother who loves her household, or who would be blessed and made a blessing.

But all that has been advanced will be unavailing if the heart and life of the mother be not pervaded by godliness—if her own temper be not that of a Christian—decided, loving, meek. It is the godly mother that can seize upon the happy moment for implanting truth. It is the godly mother that can best penetrate all sinister plans. It is she that can best mix up religion with all else that is done and said, so as to make it neither a tax nor a trifle. It is she that can offer the prayer which the youngest can comprehend. It is she that can time all, and rule all, by that sceptre which is wreathed with silk—the sceptre of “love unfeigned.” A father may awe, a mother must win the soul to godliness—

... “She is a priestess, and her shrine  
Is an immortal spirit.”

It must be confessed, however, that such a picture as is here presented must often seem overcharged.

There are godless mothers, who train up their children to sin and shame.

There are deceitful mothers, who rule their children by deception; who lead them to obedience by false promises, or scare them by superstitious threats: and mothers of this class are ignorantly destroying in their little ones the distinction between right and wrong, or between the true and the false.

Then there are worldly mothers, whose highest wishes for their children are embodied in the questions—“What shall

they eat ? what shall they drink ? or wherewithal shall they be clothed ?”

And there are ambitious mothers, who resemble her who came to Jesus seeking seats on his right hand and his left for her sons. They desire only wealth, or power, or pomp and circumstance, while yet their vaulting desires are blindly bounded by a cradle upon the one hand, and a grave upon the other.

There are ostrich mothers, who leave their young untended and untaught, morally to perish by neglect.

There are hyæna mothers, who actually destroy their offspring, or at least train them for destruction, as the mothers of Feejee inured their little ones to cannibal life by giving them human blood to lap, or human muscles to masticate.

And there are foolish mothers, who pamper and fondle their children ; who corrupt the very objects of their affection by their method of rearing them, as if they would verify the adage—“The greatest fool is he whom his mother makes one.” But such kindness is cruelty. By a foolish sympathy, mothers may screen their fondling from the correction which is deserved, but their caresses too surely nurse the waywardness which the rod should expel.

In a word, there are mothers who ruin their children’s souls,—whose example, whose engagements, whose words, whose companions, whose pleasures, are all of the earth, earthy. While a child confides in such a mother without fear, and copies her example without a doubt, she is poisoning the young immortal,—and Satan has no more powerful or more like-minded ally than a parent thus employed. The disgusting shape which poetry assigns to the Tempter, while pouring his temptations into the ear of the dreaming Eve—“squat

on his legs like a toad," is not more offensive or revolting than the conduct of such a mother while ruining the souls of her sons and daughters. She forfeits glory for herself, and robs her children of theirs.

But there are also godly mothers, whom Jeremy Taylor describes, when he says of the Countess of Carberry, "If we remember her as a mother, she was kind yet severe, careful, and prudent,—very tender, but not at all fond; a greater lover of her children's souls than of their bodies; and one that would value them more by the strict rules of honour and proper worth than by their relation to herself." And the influence of such a mother does not die with her,—nay, it operates as a power after she is mouldering in the dust, and it is by such models that the noblest specimens of humanity have been trained. In their case, reason guides affection; the mind of God is more consulted than even a mother's heart, and the result is seen in men of unflinching principle, who stand as a bulwark against corruption in every form. They have often confronted the oppressor, and dared all peril rather than connive at any crime, for they would sin against a mother's memory did they sin at all. Her prayers for them, when no ear heard but God's and theirs—prayers mingled perhaps with many tears—hover round them like guardian angels; and when they would enter on paths of shame, such memories are transformed into flaming swords.

But in glancing at a mother's position in our homes, we should not overlook the sorrows to which she is often exposed. A mother mourning by the grave of her first-born is a spectacle of woe. A mother watching the palpitating frame of her child, as life ebbs slowly away, must evoke the sympathy of the sternest. A mother closing the dying eye of

child after child, till it seems as if she were to be left alone in the world again, is one of the saddest sights of earth : when the cradle-song passes into a dirge, the heart is laden indeed. And a widowed mother hearing her little ones cry for bread, when she has no bread to give them, is agony untold. But at present, we do not refer to the inroads of ruthless death. These are directly from the hand of God, and they can be endured, sometimes even with joy, when He imparts strength. We speak rather of the moral death which a mother may be doomed to witness in the objects of her keen solicitude. There are sons who can hasten forward to their darling sins over a mother's crushed heart and lacerated feelings. She can work wonders by her deep affection, but she is not a match for the love of iniquity, when wayward youth is bent on evil ; and the most bitter of all grief, the most remediless of all woe, when only man attempts to soothe it, is the misery of her who thus weeps for the suicidal courses of some thoughtless son who listens to the tempter and will not be withstood.

Or we might here advert again to the misery of being unequally yoked, when the mother is the believer. If the unhappy wife was deceived in forming the union, her burden is comparatively light—though trials abound, her God will sustain her. But if she entered into the union, knowing that her partner-elect was not a man of God, she is reaping as she sowed, and the fruit is like the apples of Sodom. She loves the souls of her children, but an unholy husband and father may be driving or decoying them to ruin ; and the sore burden of that, has made many a mother prematurely aged—it has helped to hurry some to the grave. Withal, however, we would say, let not tried mothers, if they

be godly mothers, ever despair. Is it the husband's conduct that occasions grief? Let meekness be opposed to injury, and calmness to passion. Let the children be taught to respect even such a father—to be dutiful, affectionate, and childlike. If Home be thus made happy, it may allure the wanderer back to affection. At all events, that end will never be accomplished by outrage or crimination.

Or is it a son who creates a mother's grief? Still let her hope. A time of repentance may come. The arrow which love has fixed in the conscience may be rankling, though its pain be braved for a time; the apparent boldness may be only affectation, and a surrender may be near. When Richard Cecil, in the days of his infidelity, seemed rushing upon ruin, in spite of a Christian mother's tears and prayers, he afterwards confessed that what seemed bravery was only bravado; there was something in his soul which made him afraid of himself, and it has been the same with many besides him. He wrote—"The thoughts of a mother's prayer, and the recollection of her admonitions, often checked me in my wildest career of sin, though she knew it not. I concealed my feelings from her . . . . . I have wondered that her patience was not worn out with me; but no! hers was a mother's love. At length, I yielded and hastened home to tell her what God had done for my poor soul. . . . . She wept and rejoiced over me. We bowed around the family altar together, and poured out our souls in prayer and praise."—"What would I give," exclaims another, "to call my mother back to earth for *one* day, on my knees to ask pardon for all those little asperities of temper which from time to time had given her gentle spirit pain!" The inward judge and monitor, the viceroy of heaven, tracks the

thoughtless wanderer amid all his ways, and he must sink deep indeed before he can forget her whose smile was his first sun, whose words were his first music. When his sins have found him out at last, or when Nemesis speaks, as sooner or later she will, one of the most articulate utterances which conscience hears is "Thy Mother!"—Though far distant from the earth, we know that the moon, by her silent influences, stirs our ocean through all its depths, and produces effects which the wildest typhoon could not rival. Now a mother's memory may accomplish similar results. A son may be separated from her by the earth's diameter, or she may have crossed the gulph whose farther side is eternity. But her memory lives—her prayers are on high—her works will follow her; and in the faith of that, be it the dying charge of every mother to her children—"Be sure to meet me in heaven!"

There is one suggestion more. Perhaps the saddest sentence that can fall upon the ear regarding any child is—"He has no mother; she is dead!" It comes like a voice from the sepulchre, and involves the consummation of all the sorrows that can befall the young. In that condition they are deprived of their most tender comforter, and their wisest counsellor. They are left a prey to a thousand temptations or a thousand ills, and freed from the restraint of one who could curb without irritating, or guide without affecting superiority. Now will mothers live with their children as if they were thus to leave them in a cold and an inhospitable world? Will they guide their little ones to Him who is pre-eminently the God of the orphan, and who inspired his servant to say—"Though father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up?" It is thus that the motherless are linked

to the sympathies of Him who said concerning His people—"a mother may forget her child, yet will not I forget you."

## EXAMPLES.

We might appeal to a crowd of additional cases in illustration of a mother's power.—Alfred the Great ranks among the most royal of the British kings. When his age, his opportunities, and his enlarged views of legislation and kingly power are considered, he is unquestionably one of the most wonderful men of all the past. Now it is to his mother's sagacity and tact that we owe his acquirements.\* The author of the "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard" once said, "I have discovered a thing very little known, which is, that in one's whole life one can never have more than a single mother"—and when that mother is like-minded with the mother of Alfred the Great—so sagacious, so far-seeing and devout—she may prove a benefactress to a soul, a household, a country, and all time.†

But one example may suffice for all. From the days of Lois and Eunice down to those of Monica, and from the days of Monica to those of William Cowper, and a crowd in recent times, the maternal ascendancy may be traced in the histories of the good and the great. But from one learn all.

\* See Anderson's "Domestic Constitution," Part I., section 5.

† The feelings of Gray towards his mother were singularly deep. After his death her wearing apparel was found carefully laid up in his apartment, just as she had left it. He could never make up his mind to part with the relics, and gave them away only by will. Her memory was always fragrant to him, and thirteen years after her death he said, "It seems to have been but yesterday, and every day I live it sinks deeper and deeper into my heart." Those who have felt the strong love which links a son to a mother will be prepared, in some measure, to say how much of Gray's genius may be traced to the inspiration of his mother.



There is a mother, obviously a foreigner, busily employed in one of the homes of England in teaching her twentieth child. He is too feeble for the task-work of book-learning, for he was laid aside as lifeless at his birth. He has been spared, however, and ingenious affection has found a substitute for books. Part of that home was decorated in the Dutch fashion, with tiles upon which scriptural scenes were depicted, and these tiles became the primers from which that feeble child was taught by his mother, a Bohemian by birth. It was Dr. Doddridge who was thus instructed. The author of "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul" was thus trained to be the spiritual father of many in all the churches and in every land. About his thirteenth year, he lost that godly mother, but he never lost the knowledge which she had been the means of conveying, nor the impressions which were blessed to make him a master in Israel, and that Bohemian exile thus bequeathed to posterity a legacy more precious than the Koh-i-nor.

It would be pleasant, but superfluous, to dwell at length upon other cases of maternal power—to tell, for instance, of the mother of Lord Bacon, whose lessons and example first moulded the mind of Edward VI., and then of her illustrious son, who so revered her memory that he wished to be buried in her grave :—Or of the mother of one yet greater than Bacon, Sir Isaac Newton, who studiously devoted her best endeavours to lead him into the truth, and to stablish him there :—Or of the mother of John Newton, who assiduously watched unto prayer, that she might train her son in the nurture and admonition of the Lord :—Or of a great crowd besides, who, by their painstaking and their prayers, have given to the world some of its leaders and its lights in the up-

ward way. But enough ; and with such examples before the mind, let mothers realise their position ; let them know their own power for good or for ill, and appeal to the only wise God to make them mothers indeed—mothers to souls whom they are guiding to the Redeemer's fold.

You have a little one upon your knee—we speak as to a mother—and he is the light of your eyes ; you live two lives at once when he is near ; and what do you design to make him—we mean his soul ? Its destiny depends mainly upon you—is he, then, to be a blessing or a bane ? Is he to be a child of destruction or an heir of glory ? Be assured that in the little heart of what you call your “innocent,” there lie folded up, and ready to germinate, the seeds and elements of all sin. But you can nip them. Will you ? You can administer the divine antidote. Will you do it, and look up for the blessing ?—or will you let your little one die among your hands of the uncured spiritual malady ? Surely, never. Rather, you will live in communion with the great Teacher, and he will give success to your lessons, and shew that “a prayerful spirit is a mother's panoply.” We know that *you* cannot convert your child : that is in the hands of the all-wise and sovereign Spirit. But, still, it is true regarding him,

“ His heart, now passive, yields to thy command,  
Secure it, then, the key is in thy hand.”

It is not more certain that his body is fearfully and wonderfully made, than that you can largely influence his soul and his eternity ; and as the great God has been pleased to unite certain blessings with the believing use of certain means, you can cry for these blessings. Oh, do it then—and see two souls prospering—your own, and your child's. Neglect it—and we see nothing before you but sorrow. Place your hand,

it has been said, over your little child's heart, and feel how rapidly it beats. Now, each beat is a development. It is hastening on **unspeakable** results. Will you guide, then, to blessedness, or let **Satan** mislead to woe?

Hitherto we have pointed to the duties of a father and a mother in their separate and peculiar spheres, but let us now consider them in the exercise of a combined influence, where two are only one, but one with a moral power second only to that of the transforming Spirit.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## HELPMATES AT HOME.

Husband and Wife—Man's Position at Home—Woman's—Eden—The Family Constitution—Its Violation—Ezra's Complaint—Malachi's—National Distemper—The Converse—The Saviour and the Church—The Model and the Law of Obedience—The Weakest the most cared for—Light in the Dwelling—Precedence—The Sun and Moon—Family Separations—"The Graves of a Household"—Consolation—The Cataract of Velino—Examples—The Judsons—Rowland Hill—Mrs Hemans.

THERE is frequently a valuable moral lesson conveyed in the meaning of a single word. *Husband*, for example, is *House-band*, for he binds or unites the family into one: his dissolution often breaks up the whole. *Wife*, again, is connected with the words *weave*, and *weft*, and speaks of thrift and careful housewifery. In this manner the Saxon forefathers, who gave us our manly language as well as many other blessings, tell us in general of the duties of husband and wife. It is his to watch over all as their guardian under God; it is hers by painstaking to look well to the inner condition of her household,

"That like some gentle planet, she may run  
Along the silent course of duty's round."

But more than this. Poetry, at once the most lofty and the most lowly, delights to expatiate upon these relations. With the single exception of war and its ravages, more, perhaps, has been written upon subjects connected with Home, its joys and its sorrows, than upon any topic which

could be named. In a single line, Milton has told the whole truth regarding the relation between the two whom God has made one.

“He for God only, she for God in him,”

is the human form of expressing the inspired sentiment—  
“The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church.”

And this truth comes out in all its vividness in the earliest records of our race, for Adam was not complete till Eve was created. Eden was less than Eden needed to be, while it contained only one rational and living occupant; and He who has the residue of the Spirit accordingly formed the second as the complement of the first. Co-operation, or sympathy, was needed ere the social being, man, could find his whole nature responded to—and hence the family constitution arose. According to it, the two made one are to regulate all their proceedings in perfect harmony with each other, because in perfect harmony with the mind of God. There is to be no counteracting or counterplotting within the sacred precincts of Home. In rearing a godly offspring, the two are to be the foster parents of the children of God.\* Precept and example are to be in unison. The pair are to be both mutually consistent and self-consistent. They are, in truth, the right hand and the left of that social system of which Jehovah is the Head, and with one heart and one soul they are to carry out the purposes of Him in whom they have their being. Just as the first woman was formed from the first man, so that their frames were identical in substance, their minds are to be one in aim, because in unison with the will of God over all. Their Home is thus

\* Mal. ii. 15.

to be the Eden of Eden, the brightest and most beauteous spot among the scenes whose very name means "Delights." The first pair occupied the Holy of Holies in God's august temple—the globe, but, alas! how different the style of man's home soon became from the Great Architect's type!

For mark the misery which has followed in the wake of sin. By God's grace, there *are* happy homes. His truth is enthroned by some helpmates; and families love not merely as earthly kindred, but as sustaining a more permanent relation—they are all "one in Christ." In many a home its inmates can mutually say—

"Round my heart I will assemble  
Things and thoughts beloved of thee,  
Till each wish and taste resemble  
Those that in thy bosom be."

But, on the other hand, the sight is sad and sickening when one parent trains the child to disobey the other—when the one inculcates what the other erases—or when the passion of the father is counteracted only by the fond and the blind partiality of the mother. The spirit which sprang up in Adam's home, and which led to the first murder, the first fratricide, the first martyrdom, all in one, is thus perpetuated, and instead of being helpmates amid "the charm of music-laden hours," such pairs are mutually sources of sorrow. Home becomes the abode of tumult, not of peace. Faults are unwisely concealed, or sinfully denied, or boldly defended—and a nursery of fraud and deception is often found where the nurture and admonition of the Lord should be regulating all.

Nor need we wonder at such results. The Saviour obviously designed the family constitution to be a grand moving

power in promoting his kingdom. He set woman in her proper place, and for the first time since Adam's fall, were all her rights recognised in full and perfect harmony with the mind of God. But the Saviour's purpose was counterplotted, and ill-sorted unions with ungodly families were largely employed as the means. Ezra once rent his garments, plucked off his hair, and sat down in a paroxysm of grief because of such unions among his countrymen,\* and the last of the prophets has in like manner given us some touching accounts of the sad results of such marriages. Instead of carrying out the purposes of the domestic constitution, the hearts of parents were estranged from their children, and of children from their parents. Altars were covered with weeping. Wailing and outcry from forsaken wives resounded through the streets of Jerusalem. The nation hastened to ruin, and proved by its degeneracy, on a nation-wide scale, what is sure to follow, in spite of God's holiest appointments, when those who should be helpmates become mutual tormentors, or when husbands first crush and then forsake the wives whom they had vowed to love, to shelter, and defend.

And it is too often still the same. Where hearts are not knit to kindred hearts by common likings and a God-made union, there can be no blessedness: there is woe: there are some of the most bitter ingredients in the curse. In truth, in some abodes, those who should dwell together in unity feel the society of each other to be irksome. Like Madame de Stael and her husband, they are more happy when apart than when together, and Home is gladly deserted for some place of public resort—perhaps of revelry or crime. Sullenness reigns where all should be sunny. The will of God is reversed: His Spirit

\* Ezra ix. 3.

is grieved: and unless some wondrous change be wrought, happiness has forsaken that abode for ever.

But in contemplating this sad aspect of man's condition upon earth, we are never to lose sight of the Homes where helpmates are helpmates indeed. There joy is doubled while sorrow is divided into two. Perplexity is counselled: doubt is dissipated: temptation is repelled: blessedness is advanced. As face answers to face in a glass, soul there corresponds to soul, and the result is strength, energy, moral beauty, and all that can gladden a human Home. While the mother chiefly guides and regulates the affections, the father, like the balance-wheel in machinery, presides over the whole social system. He is the keystone or the burden-bearer; and thus upheld, the strain which would annihilate the peace of some, scarcely ruffles the serenity of such abodes. Nay more; where some crushing trial has paralysed the energies of the husband, the wife, the weaker of the two, sometimes stands erect amid the tempest. She becomes the protector amid peril, the pilot amid the storm, or does for the household what the electric rod does for the building which supports it, and which it in return defends. "Homeward to her who loves and blesses him" thus, should the heart of man ever turn with feelings allied to reverence.

And the foundation of all this is laid deep in God's eternal truth. We have already seen that the emblem selected to represent the union of husband and wife is the union of Christ and his Church;\* and by placing that relation upon such a basis, it is both dignified and hallowed. Strength supporting weakness, and weakness reposing upon strength should appear in every home, and just as the confiding soul

\* Ephes. v. 22-33.



rests on the Redeemer without a doubt, should the wife repose upon her head, as, under God, her guardian and her friend. Homes are then blessed, and God's purposes and glory are alike advanced. The pair,

"With knitted hands and loving hearts may tread  
Unscathed life's rugged wild, and reach at last  
The heavenly hills, and everlasting rest."

It is a lovely trait in parental affection that the weakest member of a family is ever the most tenderly cared for. There may be disease, or even something to repel the fastidious; nay, there may be moral delinquencies; yet it often happens that these very weaklings draw toward themselves a more tender or more weeping care; and this is the benevolent arrangement of God at once to alleviate parental trials, and supply a solace to sorrow. Now, in the same way should there be tenderness displayed from helpmate to helpmate when failings exist. The strong ought to bear with the weak. No proud recrimination; no flashing resentment against anything but sin in a Christian Home; and by such a spirit are the great objects of the domestic constitution to be wrought out. With the Divine model in view, and the Divine will to guide them in aiming at the appointed result, such helpmates will bear each other's burdens and soothe each other's sorrows. They will carry out the quaint but truthful words of Matthew Henry—"Eve was made of a rib out of the side of Adam—not made out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved." Nothing will be tolerated in such a Home which would lead the children to choose a side, or become partizans. Wisely consulting the Counsellor, and

often resorting to his throne, there will be light in that dwelling when others are dark—a light which shines from heaven, and guides the wayfarer thither. A word, a look, may increase a child's bias to evil, or rivet what might otherwise have been loosened, and against that word or that look will wise and godly helpmates live upon their guard.

Such counsels, however, would be valueless, did we not emphatically add that the grand source of harmony is the Standard Mind—the Word of God. His Spirit in the heart, the blood of sprinkling upon the conscience, the Prince of Peace presiding, will soon cut off “the little foxes which spoil the vines,” and counteract the selfishness which is sometimes apt to break forth even in Christian homes, so as to mar their beauty, or dishonour the truth.

But which of the helpmates should take precedence? We answer, neither. They walk abreast, if love and wisdom guide them. Each parent has a proper sphere of influence, and they belie the name of *helpmates* if they arrogate or demand, instead of mutually aiding and upholding. Philip Henry often argued, that the mother should lead the family devotions from time to time, that she might be prepared to conduct them in the father's absence, or in the event of his being summoned away by death. His quaint illustration was, that it was pleasant to see the moon rising just as the sun went down; and that may decide the question—which parent should have the precedence? It is not an affair of precedence at all. The divine order makes them helpmates—not rivals or antagonists. Each is the other's second self; and as the sun does not intrude into the province of the moon, nor the reverse, there should be no jarring and no contention in a home. The only pro-

voking should be to love and to good works. When decisions *must* be given, the head, of course, is to give them ; for it is true as well as beautiful—

“ Adorn’d  
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract  
Thy love, not thy subjection, and her gifts  
Were such as, under government well seemed  
Unseemly to bear rule, which was thy part.”

—The infringement of these principles at first occasioned the fall,—and the infringement of them again repeats it in our homes—in sin as well as sorrow.

It is well, however, to reinforce these conclusions by all available means. Families, then, sooner or later, break up. They cannot always nestle round the same parent pair ; and when some of them are gone perhaps to the grave—perhaps to this world’s extremity, what is it that can soothe or sustain bereaved helpmates ? Take your stand by “the graves of a household.” All—all perhaps are gone to the Spirit-land, and what is it that can soothe the childless parents ? Can family jarrings minister consolation ? As sorrow after sorrow transfixes the soul, can the remembrance of feuds and alienations dry the tears which flow ? Nay ; they can only deepen the wound, or make it more profusely bleed. It is the thought of the young trained as the Father who is in heaven has commanded, that can alleviate the pain. It is the hope that the Lamb of God had become the joy of the soul, that reconciles a weeping parent to the thought of so many graves. Like the cataract of the Velino, whose waters are dashed to vapour by their fall, and become

—“ an eternal April to the ground,  
Making it all one emerald,”

the very tears of such helpmates may tend at last to gladden and invigorate the soul of the believer. Many a stricken mother, in such a case, has been enabled to lift her heart from earth to heaven—from the fleeting shadow to the enduring reality. The Son of God has filled up the blank, and more; and the hope has grown bright, that though dis-severed here, the mother and her child will be united here-after. She has one tie less to earth, and one tie more to heaven, and trusts through grace to mingle her hymns with her child's before the throne for ever.

## EXAMPLES.

We might gather illustrations of these views from many sources.—Adoniram Judson, and Anne Hasseltine, his wife, were the first Christian missionaries to Burmah; and in laying the foundations of truth in that dark land, they encountered difficulties and hardships such as few, even among Christian missionaries, have endured in modern times. For the sake of the Saviour, for whom they lived and died, their lives and their liberty were often put in jeopardy, that they might point the dying to hope. Atheism walked hand in hand with debasing superstition among the Burmese. Despotism on the throne, aided by all that is tyrannical in subordinate rulers, obliged the Judsons to hold their lives in their hands, ready to surrender them, or else to abandon the work which they believed God had given them to do. And the day of dreaded oppression came. Their works of faith began to be crowned with success. Superstition took alarm, for souls were saved. Despotism was offended, for freedom was asserted at least for the soul, and vengeance fell on the offending teachers of the truth. Under

various pretexts Dr Judson was imprisoned, and in his cell was treated with a cruelty such as nothing but Eastern despotism could inflict. Chain was added to chain. Prison after prison became his abode,—each in succession more offensive than its predecessor. Indignity rapidly followed indignity, and such was the dire calamity which befell that man of God that suicide was thought of, at least it once flashed across his mind, as an outlet from his sufferings.

But in these circumstances all that is implied in a helpmate was fully realised. The wife of the sufferer sought his release along every open channel. She penetrated into the palace, and pled there as only a woman could plead. She appealed to cruel officials and ruthless jailers, and made some even of them weep before her. Night and day, amid throbbing agony and crowding insults, she persevered in that labour of love, till her example shews how truly God may be glorified by the very weakness of his servants. Yet all was vain, and Dr Judson was removed to a distant prison, in order to be burned alive. Thither, however, his helpmate followed, but only to be herself prostrated by disease—and now began the duties of the other helpmate in his turn. By a signal providence, or chain of providences, Judson's life was spared, and though fettered still, and not permitted to move without a clanking chain, he carried his wailing little child to heathen mothers to beg from them a portion of nature's nourishment for his dying starveling. The mother was at times delirious, and amid his growing woes, that father had to do what perhaps no mortal but himself was ever forced to face. Oh, how potent is the love of Christ! See that fettered father enduring all this for Him, and then understand His power.

Here, then, we find an illustration of the divine institution of home-helpmates, such as the world's history can scarcely parallel. These two literally bore each other's burdens. Their lives were sometimes lent to each other in the battle of life, and both triumphed amid their trials, because each had the other for a support.

And it is ever thus when the divine institutions are the guides of men. Sorrow is soothed. A prison may become a place for hymns. Fetters may cease to chafe, or they may be lightly borne, when man or woman has just learned to *lean*—to lean upon the strength of God. How sunny and serene our homes, how full of joy our hearts, were man only so wise as to make the will of God paramount ! Judson was a man of strong will, of indomitable zeal, of unflinching resolution when he was confronted with perils ; but even his strength would have proved his weakness had it not been for his helpmate.

We might find another illustration of the topic now before us in the life of Rowland Hill. For many years he and his helpmate were to each other all that God designed them to be. When affliction came upon the one, the other suffered not less, and yet had strength and calmness to aid the tried one. What that remarkable man had in excess, she had in great moderation, and they were thus the complements of each other. In his plans she judiciously aided, but there was that in her views which his sometimes wanted, so that the two together presented a symmetrical combination. Hill had to watch against sallies of humour which often degenerated into irrepressible fun. His helpmate was calmer and more self-governing. She consequently acted like a refrain upon him, and often regulated without repress-

ing her husband's mirth. An union of sixty years only made their mutual adaptation more and more manifest, as it tended to render their life as believers more completely "the gladsome fellowship of hearts."

Or were it needful to introduce a contrast here, to give greater prominence to the truth, we might refer to the married life of Mrs Hemans. It is well known that she and her helpmate were so unequally yoked that they soon separated for ever. Though their union at first promised a happiness of the highest order, it was speedily clouded by some cause which has never yet been fully divulged. But though a veil of mystery hangs over the whole proceedings of the ill-sorted pair, enough is known to shew that, though married, the parties were not helpmates. They were to each other the occasion of pain or of repulsion, not of increased happiness; and their separation deepened, if it did not originate, that tone of melancholy which characterised the mind of Mrs Hemans. She could weep with ready emotion amid impressive scenes of loveliness, as she once did at the beauty of moonlight among the environs of Edinburgh; and it is easy to fancy the laceration endured by a nature so sensitive and tender, amid disruptions so touching as she was compelled to endure.

## CHAPTER IX

### INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD.

Savage Life—The Model of Beauty—A Birth—Baptism—The Impressibility of Infancy—Its Curiosity—Its Happiness—The Duration of its Pleasures—The Brevity of its Grief—Selfishness—Julius Cæsar—Napoleon Bonaparte—Luther—Reflex influence of Infancy on Parents—Precocity—Obedience—An Infant's Death—Examples—"The Holy Child"—Joseph—Isaac—Moses—Samuel—Jeremiah—John the Baptist.

AMONG the North American Indians different tribes train their young in very different ways. By some clans, flat heads are deemed beautiful, and the infant's skull is carefully compressed and flattened to the proper standard of beauty. Other tribes shape and mould the head upon a different ideal, so that infancy begins life amid tortures such as some Europeans endure to fashion the body to a capricious configuration. It is well known, moreover, that, among the Chinese, the feet of female infants are curtailed and compressed by artificial means till it becomes a marvel how they can either walk or stand. From all this we learn what pains are taken at once by the savage and the civilised regarding the body and its training.

But the same thing is true, to a far wider extent, regarding the mind. The expansive or the compressible power is there much greater in its range. By the force of circumstances, it may be depressed to the verge of idiocy, or enlarged till it seems to walk among the stars.



Now, when we look at Infancy as a component part of our homes, one of the first things to strike us is its absolute helplessness. A folded flower does not depend upon sunshine and dew so much as an infant upon the help of others; and to supply that help has been an object of special care to the Great Father of all. No sooner does a child enter upon life than new emotions are awakened by its appearance—new ties are formed: from the centre to the circumference of man's being, all is affected by such an advent. New words are invented to greet the stranger: new tones are used to gladden him. Unconscious as he may seem to be, he has already thrilled more hearts than one with joy, and awakened feelings which perhaps pass up to the throne, and may glow for ever in the presence of Godhead. It is a wondrous event, and turns a wise man's words into things—"If ye are blessed with children, ye have a fearful pleasure." It is the birth of an eternal duration, for the little helpless wailer has a germ of being—a principle in him which will outlast all time, and outshine all suns. True: it too often happens that each addition thus made to a human family only augments the sum of the world's woe. It may come in the shape of helpless innocence, but it may end in the consummation of crime. Yet, all that conceded, the prayer of one believing mother may be used by many:—

"Greatest and Holiest of woman born,  
That for our guilty sakes encradled lay  
In the unworthy manger—hear the prayer  
Of a glad mother, kneeling at thy throne,  
Beseeching Thee . . . . .  
. . . . . to spread the wings,  
The sheltering wings of thy eternal love,  
Above her little one."

The birth of each little child thus awakens a crowd of

deep emotions in a home. Its first cry pierces with strange poignancy to the parent's heart; and then, as the infant powers are developed, our wonder grows at the multiform adaptations which exist between that helpless being and the great world around it. The air for its breathing—light for its eye—music for its ear—ten thousand things to gladden or regale, all come crowding round the child; at the same time, all is fascinating—that little one would smile at the gleaming of a knife brandished for its immolation. "Solitary and unrelated as it may seem, cascades of influence stream on it from all sides round. Every object soon becomes a book,—every place a school-house,—and every event ploughs in some winged seeds which will be bearing their appropriate fruit ten thousand ages hence." \*

And this is perhaps the best place to advert to the baptism of a child. When an infant is presented to God in that ordinance, the parent has superadded fresh ties to all that bound him before. By naming the Heavenly Father's name, the parent and the child together are placed under the guardianship of God over all, and that parent is to train that child to love God as a Father; not to recoil from Him as a consuming fire. Through the earthly relation, the child is to know and to love the heavenly, and thus the parent, in dedicating his child to God, rears a high wall around himself, to fence him off at once from all that is unfatherly, and all that is ungodly. Again, in that solemn dedication, by naming the Saviour's name over the little one, he is placed under an Almighty Shield. The believing father

\* See "Patriarchy," Chap. ix. throughout.

claims for that little one the atoning blood, the sanctifying power, the renewed image of God—all, in short, that is contained in the well-ordered covenant. He moreover seeks for his child, in hopeful faith, the indwelling of that Spirit who alone can make man holy, and without whose hallowing power the Saviour would have died in vain. Now all these things involve obligations the most stringent which heart can frame or tongue express: and he does not love his child aright—he has not realised the preciousness of his infant's soul—who does not, in baptism, seek the Christian's God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—with all the heart, and all the soul, and all the strength and mind. A little one thus dedicated to God, is weakness placed under the guardianship of Omnipotence—parents may then use means and firmly hope in God.

But 2. The next thing perhaps which attracts us in an infant, is its impressibility. A tone, a look, a gesture affects it, and these effects may be everlasting. As children may imbibe disease or death with their first aliment, they may receive impressions in their first years which never fade away. A mother has only to speak, and she

“Plants the great hereafter in this Now,”

and hence, before anything earthly has taken possession of the infant soul, a bias may be imparted by affection which leads to results as deathless as that soul itself. In the use of toys, in quest of entertainment and of happiness in the society of other infants, and in other ways, some of the great principles which guide man's mind are either nursed or effaced, for it is not written in vain—“With his mother's milk the young child drinketh education.”

There are millions throughout the world who remember their visit to the Crystal Palace. They can recall the impressions which were then made, and which came crowding in through every sense. It seemed as if the world were there, or as if we could visit all nations by a few paces of locomotion—and what that spectacle, so vast yet so minute, so multiform yet so simple, was to the millions who saw it, this world seems to every child who enters it. Everything stamps a fresh impression upon him. Like the winged insect just escaped from the chrysalis, and rejoicing for the first time in its sunshine, its nectar, and its wings, that infant soul finds joy or sorrow—happiness or fear—but rather the first, in everything that invites attention. The little being who must live for ever in glory or in gloom, begins “the journey to the skies” amid myriads of objects all impressing the impressible—all stamping knowledge upon it, as photography reproduces images in thousands. It is often observed, that the first seven years of life decide the character of the whole threescore and ten—and the remark is universally true, except in cases where some mighty revolution is wrought by future grace.

And how beneficent are the Divine arrangements to meet this case! “What seminary is provided for infancy? To what teacher is it committed? The seminary is Home, the teacher is the parent. What spot on earth so likely to abound in genial influences as the fireside? What master so likely to teach with blended wisdom and goodness as the parent?” As his God teaches him in love the most tender and long-suffering, should the earthly parent teach, train, bear with, guide, and gladden his child, making all things joyous with one exception—the abominable thing.

3. Another peculiarity in infancy is its restless curiosity. No such persevering investigator as a little child, whether it be in the analysis of a toy, or the demolition of some offending favourite. An infant's philosophy is both analytic and inductive. His endless inquiries, as soon as he can speak—his absolute avarice of knowledge—his insatiable longings ever growing with what they feed on, are all so many wise adaptations to augment the wisdom of childhood. But poetry has painted all that need be said on this subject—and we give full scope to some of its utterances. "See its power expand," one has said, regarding Curiosity—

"See its power expand,

When first the coral fills the infant's hand;  
Throned in his mother's lap, he dries each tear,  
As her sweet legend falls upon the ear;  
Next it assails him in his top's strange hum,  
Breathes in his whistle, echoes in his drum.  
Each gilded toy which doting love bestows  
He longs to break, and every spring expose.  
Placed by your hearth, with what delight he pores  
O'er the bright pages of the pictured stores.  
How oft he steals upon your graver task,  
Of this to tell you, and of that to ask,  
And when the warning hour to bedward bids,  
Though gentle sleep sits waiting on his lids,  
How winningly he pleads to gain you o'er,  
That he may read one little story more!

"Nor yet alone to toys and tales confined,  
It sits dark brooding o'er his embryo mind;  
Take him between your knees, peruse his face,  
While all you know, or think you know, you trace.  
Tell him who spoke creation into birth,  
Arch'd the broad heavens, and spread the rolling earth;  
Who form'd a pathway for the obedient sun,  
And bade the seasons in their circles run;  
Who fill'd the air, the forest, and the flood,  
And gave man all for comfort or for food;  
Tell him he sprang at God's creating nod—  
He stops you short with, 'Father, who made God?'"

No doubt the principle which these lines paint requires to be directed and controlled. We have seen a child hastening to pluck a water-lily, which floated in beauty upon its broad green leaves, as if it grew on solid land; and, had that child not been arrested, she might, in her ignorance, have found a watery grave. In like manner, curiosity may lead to peril; it may degenerate into scepticism, and urge us beyond the limits assigned by God to man's knowledge. But, under the guidance of blended affection and skill, that principle is the fountainhead of unmeasurable progress, of illimitable stores of knowledge—it leads to impressions as indelible as the grooves in granite rocks, to which Geology points as telling of what happened thousands of years ago. Could we denude the soul of man, when he has reached the age of fifty, of all that he has gone forth to acquire at the prompting of curiosity, he would be reduced to infancy even then; his mind would be well-nigh a void.

4. Another peculiarity of childhood or of infancy is its buoyant and elastic happiness. First of all, in its own inherent stores, or in what it has already acquired, healthy infancy has exhaustless treasures of enjoyment. There wells up in the soul a ceaseless spring of gladness, and this perennial gush of felicity speaks loudly to us of the goodness of our God.—All this has been well illustrated by pointing to the happy children who are found in the lanes and alleys of our large towns. Clotted often with impurity; arrayed not seldom in rags; steeped quite frequently in unseemliness, to a fastidious eye, many of them are yet supremely happy. Like the oil of the high priest of old, that happiness spreads over the whole frame of such children, and even the mud amid which they roll, can be converted by them into a source

of real enjoyment. And then, how often may we notice the children who follow the beggar whose only home is a hut, or perhaps but a hedgerow, as jubilant and gleesome as if they were the inmates of a palace! The lot and the fare of such waifs seem altogether hard, yet in corporeal enjoyment at least, they are on a level with the most favoured children of wealth.—All that is needed is just to give childhood scope or materials to work upon, and its power of inventing entertainment will stretch beyond our fancy. As there is an unconscious influence put forth by parents upon children, there are unknown resources in children themselves, which need only to have space for development, when all will be buoyantly happy.

And then, in addition, the pleasures of infancy are so much more lasting than its pains, that we can there trace again the goodness of God. See a little girl, it has been said, with her favourite doll. She idealizes, she fondles, she clothes, she punishes, she teaches, she airs, she does a hundred things, all augmenting her happiness, and making young life like a sunny summer day. But, on the other hand, see her in tears under some calamity—and smiles almost instantly come to dry them. Laughter supersedes what threatened to end in sobs, or if grief does deepen into sighs, it is but the passing of a cloud over some spot of sunshine—all is speedily serene again; and he was true to Nature who sang,

“The tear down childhood’s cheek that flows,  
Is like the dew-drop on the rose;  
When next the summer breeze comes by  
And waves the bush, the flower is dry.”

Nor are these joys merely animal in their nature. It is mind, philosophy has said—“it is the rich and grasping and

excursive mind . . . . . that is at work in the child's poor materials of felicity . . . . . ; they suggest conceptions of things dimly recollected and now absent, which people the fancy in crowds, and lead it on until the soul is lost in the chase."\* The amusements of infancy, in short, like much besides, though childlike, are not childish. Its pleasures are deep and abiding, and they form no small element of consideration in its training.

5. But side by side with these pleasant traits of infancy, the force of truth compels us to mention others of a different type. Waywardness is often its element; selfishness deflowers much that would otherwise be morally lovely, for the creatures whose first wail agonises a parent, and whose first smile forms an era in a home, are all that the Scriptures say—"Iniquity is bound up in their hearts from childhood," "childhood and youth are vanity;" there lie folded up in the young soul principles which may be developed either into a Howard or a Borgia. And parents can sometimes scarcely look upon Infancy without being prompted to forecast the coming character of the child who is softly smiling on their knee. Had the mother of Julius Caesar been a Christian, and could she have foreseen that her son would cause the death of about three millions of immortal beings, what sorrows would have been hers? Or if the mother of Napoleon Bonaparte was a Christian, what would have been her feelings could she have foretold the miseries to which his vaulting ambition would lead? On the other hand, could Luther's mother have anticipated the halo of glory which was to encircle her boy, as the author of spiritual freedom to

\* Taylor's "Home Education," p. 35.



millions, would not her heart have leaped for joy? Could she have looked unmoved upon the God-sent man, who

‘Raised himself above the throng  
That climbs and jostles up the steep ascent  
Of busy life,”

as he tore the mask from superstition, or gave liberty to the spiritual slave?

Now all this warns us of the consequence which may attach to infancy; there may be folded up in it the power which shall girdle the globe with its influence, the genius which shall illumine many lands with its light, the benevolence which shall stem the terrible torrent of misery which is sweeping the millions of mankind to woe; or there may be there the savage soul which shall scatter firebrands, arrows, and death. No parent is wise who does not keep all this in view, and act towards his little one under the full conviction that that child is at the very least immortal, and may be a terrible scourge, or a signal blessing, while he *must* influence many for good or for ill for ever. A Roman emperor began his career of cruelty by torturing insects, and ended by wishing that the Roman people had only one head that he might decapitate them all at a blow; and with such possibilities lying before infancy, we may well feel the force of the saying, that they are happy whom grace has taught to give “the unbroken heart’s first fragrance to heaven.” In answer to the question, “Is it well with thy child?” a parent can then reply, “It is well.” There are some who practically expunge the truth of the new birth as useless or extreme, but they have yet to learn God’s mind regarding man’s heart.

But, 6. In this connexion we may mention the influence of

infancy upon parents themselves. The birth of a child alters all the arrangements of a household, all its relations, its language, and its doings. Poetry says that "the child is father to the man," and is true to nature in the saying. The child cannot but react upon its parents. The mother's whole soul especially is flooded with new cares, new joys, new emotions, as shifting as the colours on the neck of a dove, while the father is cheered amid his toils because his child shares in his reward, or is attracted to his home, "the garner-house of all his dear delights," because he knows that the smile of his child will greet him, or its frolics amuse. It is in truth a moral power, for who can look upon a child's first smile, or trace its buoyant movements, most of them movements of joy, without becoming joyous in turn? Or who can mark its early waywardness without feeling the force and the truth of a hundred sayings of the Holy One? Lastly, who can be reduced to the necessity of punishing a child without learning humbling lessons from the duty?

It is thus that the reflex influence of childhood upon parenthood appears. It develops forethought and wisdom. It fosters economy and care. It tends to make happiness more bright, or to arrest and startle a godless parent in his career of ruin. The lisped prayer of a little child, taught by some other than a father, has gone to that father's heart like a barbed arrow which only Omnipotence could extract. A child may thus wield an irresistible influence; it may literally be one of the weak things which are chosen to confound the mighty, or arrest some of the unthinking in the paths of the destroyer.

"Those who are much employed in training the young for Jesus have found great benefit to themselves from being led

to dwell on simple views of truth and duty, and to keep God's Word ever warm and fresh in their hearts, that they might talk of it to children. They have, also, felt a strong motive to watchful consistency in feeling, temper, word, and conduct, in order to shew the little ones practically what it is to follow Jesus. How often have they found lessons for themselves, and types of heaven, in the ever-springing gladness, the glowing admiration, the ceaseless action, the love and confidence of their young charge! And when the truths they had instilled into infant minds have come back to them, uttered by the little ones in their own sweet, simple words, they have felt that God does indeed commit to babes a wondrous and most precious ministry; and that such of their fellow-Christians as have no sympathy or communion with childhood, have deprived themselves of one important means, provided by God, to instruct, to gladden, and to sanctify His people.

"Oh, that ministers and congregations could be aroused to act in the spirit of an infant's prayer, 'Lord, I want to have Thy Holy Spirit *now*. I do not wish to wait a long time. I do not wish to wait till to-morrow. I want to have Thy Spirit *now*!' Surely an angel would be glad to come down from heaven, if he might but help in fulfilling such desires as these."\*

Now such reflex influence of infancy and childhood may well be ranked among the most helpful or the most solemnising of all moral agencies. The little tyrant who domineers in a family, or the little idol to which all hearts turn, or all feet rush, cannot but affect the household through all its members, as fever affects the body through all its pores. Nor

\* See "An Appeal to the Ministers of Christ on behalf of 'The Little Ones,' by a christian Mother."—Pp. 21, 22. A very touching plea.

should we fail to notice how infancy may remind its parents of their own dependence on a heavenly Father, and their own obligation to love him. The little preacher may thus point us Godward by its very helplessness, and our weakest may thus prove not merely our tenderest care, but moreover our truest monitor.

7. One class of little children deserve to be specified here, because of their peculiar influence—the clever, the precocious, and therefore, too often, the spoiled. Unwise parents pride themselves on the early development of mind. When they can do little more than prattle, some children are forced into precocious prodigies, at whose shrine all must worship, to whom adulation is the incense, and inflated vanity the result. Rather the result is, multiform evil; and many a parent has been compelled bitterly to deplore the injury thus done to the young. We cannot too soon develop or train the moral principles, or the heart and its love, its confidence and its purity. Such love ought to form the moral atmosphere of every Home, to be disturbed by nothing but sin. But to stimulate infancy to premature acquirement is the high way to mental feebleness, to wasted health, and at last, it may be, to broken hearts. It is not to be denied that some children have been singularly gifted by God, and sometimes appear among their fellows with a wisdom such as man cannot impart. Strength is ordained out of the mouth of such babes, and no man may limit the Holy One. But that is essentially different from the unnatural forcing of childhood into that prematurity of learning which too often terminates in a manhood of mental feebleness, or in some cases, even of vice.

We should not forget to say, however, that, amid all our

efforts on behalf of infancy, our aim should ever be its conversion to God by His Spirit. Unless that be sought, all else is unavailing ; and the home in which that is not promoted, by prayer and in the use of means, comes far short of the real character of a Christian abode. A Christian mother, who knows how to promote "the music of home joys," has said, and we adopt the saying—"Very few, even among Christian parents, expect the early conversion of children. They *hope* that God will at length turn these dear ones to Himself ; but, too often, they take it for granted, that childhood must be passed in careless indifference to the precious Saviour. They think of converting grace as a suddenly transforming power, which may, at some future period, come direct from heaven, like a rushing mighty wind ; while they *should* be looking for it, hourly, in all their dealings with their children, as the dew that distills in silence on the tender herb. The loving influence and authority of parents, and their simple teaching of God's holy word, are the appointed medium of a Divine work in children ; and while the parent feels that these are empty channels in themselves, he should expect a living stream to descend through them into the young heart, and cause holiness to spring up there like a willow by the water-course." \*

With these principles or truths present to the mind, we need not here enter into any details regarding infant or early training. If love and pains-taking be due upon the one hand, obedience, prompt, universal and unvarying, is due upon the other—and that parent is turning his home into a nursery for sorrow who smiles, or connives at disobedience

\* "An Appeal to the Ministers of Christ on behalf of 'The Little Ones,' by a Christian Mother."—Pp. 13, 14.

in any right thing. It is the will of the Supreme, embodied in one of his ten precepts, that such obedience should be rendered, and parents conspire both against their little one's happiness and their own, unless obedience be secured. It may cost a struggle, but the result is worth far more than an effort. That result is a happy home, a happy child, and by the blessing of God, glory and honour in the end.

We have as yet only glanced at the death of little ones, though that is one of the means which are frequently employed for the right training of home. It is, at the same time, one of the mysteries of God's world—inexplicable but for His Word. "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ;" but that only deepens the mystery ; and oh, how the heart of a Christian parent must ache when he has just laid his little one in the grave, and laid him there because of God's sentence upon sin ! That little one may outlive all worlds, but meanwhile, it has encountered a dismal eclipse—the empty home is hung with sackcloth, and, like Rachel, the parents may weep bitter tears, because their child is not. It is one of the darkest hours that can gather blackness around a home, and the appeal to the life-giving Lord may well be—

" Hear a sad mother's cry,  
Who in the hour of her bereavement wails,  
And, Rachel-like, bemoans her early dead."

But there are gleams of light through the cloud. As children were employed to peal forth hosannas to the Son of David in the temple of old, the believing parent can cherish the hope that the same employment engrosses them in the Temple above. That is his solace, and, meanwhile he leaves his little ones to "sleep in Jesus." The faded flower will yet be made to bloom.

## EXAMPLES.

To exemplify all that has been said, we might appeal to the history of many of the children of Scripture. We might speak of that "holy child Jesus," whom prophets foretold—whom angels proclaimed—whose birth summoned a new star for a time into the sky—before whom hoary sages hastened to spread out their offerings, or at whose rumoured advent even the truculent Herod sat uneasy on his throne. We might tell how he grew in wisdom and in stature ; how he was early at his Father's work, and early took his place at the fountainhead of knowledge among the learned of his day.

Or, if that example be too august and unearthly, we might pass from Jesus the anti-type to Joseph the type, and tell how signally he, in youth and age, was watched over by God—not exempted from trials, and these of the sorest kind—but by trials prepared for triumph—by lowliness for being great—and by a dungeon for a palace, almost for a throne.

But time would fail us to tell of Isaac, the child of promise ; of Moses, in the ark of bulrushes ; of Samuel, who was "lent to the Lord all the days of his life ;" of Jeremiah and John the Baptist, who were sanctified from their birth ; of Timothy, whose grandmother and mother trained him in the knowledge of God's will, as soon as he could be trained at all. These all testify how much may depend, even in our earliest years, upon a parent's painstaking—a mother's prayer, or a father's example. And how many of the lost will trace their perdition to the impressions first made in childhood, and perpetuated through the stages by which boyhood passes into manhood, and manhood imperceptibly glides into hoary hairs and the grave ! How many,

on the other hand, who are hopefully the heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, will for ever ascribe that character and that glory to the impressions which a mother made, ere the world had hardened the heart, or made it defiant of restraint alike from God and man! They early learned to imitate the young disciple, who said that "if he had a thousand hearts, he would engage them all in love to Immanuel," and with such resolutions, the youngest rank already among the blessed for ever.



## CHAPTER X.

## SONS.

Parental Responsibility—The Perils of Sons—Control passing into Counsel—Education—Choice of a Profession—The Parents' Duty—Difficulties—Passion—Ignorance—Caprice—Training "for the Church"—Prodigals—The Misery which they Spread—Wise Sons—Glad Parents—Examples—George Washington—Richard and Rowland Hill—George Canning—Scriptural Cases.

It might solemnise the most unthinking parent could he but once realise the fact that he must answer to the Just Judge for the soul of every child beneath his roof. His own soul and his children's constitute his spiritual charge, and could all that is implied in such responsibility be felt as it ought to be, the most worldly would be startled for a little, the most thoughtless would be compelled to think. That so much as a single parent should be neglecting his children's souls, and therefore doing what he can to ruin them for ever, is one of the saddest considerations that can engross the mind of man. What guilt where there should be blamelessness! What folly where there should be wisdom! What cruelty where there should be love! What woe when the day of repentance, or, failing that, of righteous retribution comes!

And this circumspection is specially needed whenever there are special temptations. If there be some members of our homes in whom passion not seldom usurps the place of principle, they demand a parent's peculiar care ; and this

is too often the case with Sons. Often thoughtless, impatient of control, bent upon their own will and their own way, both the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove are required to guide them in duty—let us next glance, then, at the sons of our homes.

Upon the sun-dial it is the shadow that indicates the hour, and in the life of boys, character is often displayed by unholy deeds. Passing from infancy to boyhood, they often wish to overleap one stage and be men at a bound. They long to be independent, or only self-dependent, and are often defiant of every wise restraint. This may not arise from any precocity of power, but only from precocity in sin, and perhaps no future years of life witness so much iniquity as those of this transition time. Conscience sometimes appears to be dormant; reason is overborne; and hence the need of firmness tempered at once by wisdom and affection. The young soul is wayward in proportion to its ignorance or its want of conscience; and the parent who would neither connive at a son's guilt nor conspire to ruin him, must resolutely adopt the maxim,

*"Principiis obsta : sero medicina paratur  
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras."*

*"Crush the first germ : too late your cares begin  
When long delays have fortified the sin."*

The greatest strain upon parental wisdom, and the clearest proof of parental impotency for good, without the blessing of God, meet us in many a home just at the point now referred to.

But this is too vague. That sons should obey their parents "in all things" is a scriptural maxim which only infidelity can challenge. During infancy the parent's claim

to that obedience is absolute. He is answerable only to God for commanding, and the child only for obeying. "Honour thy father and thy mother" is the basis of all duty between man and man : it is the first clause in the decalogue after the precepts which relate to God. The fifth is thus a compound command, enjoining obedience alike to the heavenly and the earthly father ; and all that, for the first time in the decalogue, is accompanied with a promise. The parent is thus put in God's place in regard to infant obedience.

But as the son advances in days, a period arrives when absolute control passes into rational guidance—when reasons should be given for commands—when consultations should be held and confidence cherished. In some cases the child's preference should decide the measures to be adopted, in others that preference should be resolutely withstood ; and it is this that tries both the head and the heart of many a parent. Neither to expect that in boyhood which can be found only in maturity, nor to yield to passion, or caprice, or waywardness ; neither to do as despotism does, making children serfs, nor, as Eli did, leaving them unchecked and sin ascendant—requires a wisdom more than mortal ; and what parent dare say that he has never erred at this important era in the history of his home ?

Further, in the case of sons, their education must of course be influenced by their pursuits in life. They should learn not merely to *know*, but to *be wise*. They are not merely to be *taught*, but to be *trained*—not merely to learn to inquire, but moreover to do and to act. Even a heathen emperor could say, "The highest learning is to be wise, the highest wisdom is to be good ;" and that maxim should preside over the training of boys. As youth is the season of progress,

while age becomes conservative, stagnant, or timid, that youthful tendency should be both fostered and directed ; and the secret of home-happiness is not fully known where the longing to advance so native to youth is not carefully studied, or skilfully employed for good.

But all that need be said upon this subject here may be comprehended under suggestions regarding the choice of a profession. It frequently happens that a father consults his own views in this respect, rather than his son's. The prospect of gain, some domestic arrangement, vanity, caprice, and similar causes, may decide one of the most important steps in life. But these things ought not so to be. That son is less than dutiful who lightly sets aside a parent's counsel ; but, on the other hand, unless the choice be wicked, or foolish, or ignorant, it should form an element in the final decision. The neglect of that maxim has shed a blight over some hearts for life ; and warned thereby, talent, taste, and physical and mental energy are all to be considered in deciding a boy's course for life. A parent's plans may be thwarted, and bright hopes may seem to be dashed, but unless the chosen pursuit be one to which no Christian parent can be a party without sin, he may solace himself with the thought that no one ever did well what he did from compulsion, perhaps with hatred or loathing. In a word, the predilections, the taste, and the likings of youth have their place, and the wisest father will be most prompt in conceding to them all their legitimate scope.

And when coercion has been employed, how ruinous have been the effects ! It often happens, for example, that parents train their son "for the Church." In some homes it is just as fixed a law that the second son shall inherit the

family "living," as that the eldest shall inherit the family estate. Now, what havoc that practice has wrought in individual souls, and in whole districts, need not be told. What seared consciences ! What godless ministers ! What neglected flocks ! What hireling shepherds ! What lying unto God in ordination vows ! Surely in this respect the compassionate maxim of the Scriptures comes into full operation—"Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged."

It is doubtless true that the choice for life is often made by boyhood at a period when passion rather than reason, or caprice rather than conscience, controls it ; and hence, no doubt, a crowd of dangers. Withal, however, counsel not coercion constitutes the remedy ; and the parent who knows the way to the throne of the Father of all will not be left unfriended. Regarding his son, he may see this parental prayer answered :—

"Direct his tastes to innocent pursuits,  
And bless him with the friendship and the love  
Of those who may assist him on the road  
Of honour, piety, and lasting peace."

But hitherto we have spoken of sons without much reference to what is moral in their position in our homes ; and who has not noticed their influence there ? Who has not seen how they sometimes operate, like a malignant star, to blight—withering peace, and exterminating all that is lovely, except only hope ? Who, for example, can think of the mother of Richard Cecil, while he seemed rushing upon ruin, as an infidel and presumptuous stripling, without also thinking of a heart half-broken, of spirits crushed, of all but Christian faith extinguished ? We look back over

a long vista of years : we recall the sights and the scenes of sorrow witnessed in their course,—the widowhood, the orphanage, the woes unutterable and countless, beheld as a minister of religion ; but among them all, none have been more poignant or more bitter than the tears which were shed, and the agony which was endured, on account of the waywardness of sons.

“A conscience seared, which the dying love  
Of a mother's heart could brave,  
Nor heed though grief bade the almond-tree  
Bloom fast for a father's grave”—

is symptomatic of a high attainment in heartless profligacy. It is not death—it is guilt ; it is not the body—it is the soul ; it is not time—it is eternity lost, that agonises there.\* Does God direct to these remarks some soul which remembers the time when it was better with it than it is now ?—when prayer was more relished ?—when God was not forgotten ?—when a mother's influence was not daringly put aside ? Then let it pause. Its career is towards the second death ; and the flower which withers on its stalk, the blossom which goes up like rottenness, the beauty which is sent to feed the worm, suggests no such saddening images as the condition of that soul. Here, if ever, Omnipotence is needed to arrest the wanderer, and lead him into the narrow way of peace.

But there is light upon the retrospect — the very light of heaven. While the prodigal in the parable finds many a copyist in common life, it is not less true that many a son is the joy and rejoicing of his home. He has learned to love

\* It seems to have been in the view of such things that the following passage, among the most startling of Scripture, was recorded :—“If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them :

souls ; and even when the father has been hurrying to ruin, such a son has become the family stay : he has averted calamity, and been like a minister of joy. Such a youth could find no solace where others have found it—in the fact that he was “the son of parents passed into the skies,” but his lineage was nobler still ; it was direct from God : he was a member of the household of faith, and, as such, an heir of glory : he took rank among the early wise, and was known and read as a living epistle of Christ.

Or, once again. There have been sons who stood forth as the shield and the refuge of parents whom adversity had ruined, and who were descending in sorrow to the grave. And of all the bright spots which arrest the eye in our dark world, this is one of the brightest.

“This will a mother's heart repay,  
If that loved band,  
Amidst life's doubtful battle-fray,  
By grace sustain'd, shall often say,  
‘Next to God's hand,  
All of true happiness we know,  
Mother, to thy strong love we owe.’”

Thus blessed is it to see youth repaying parentage for its cares and its love by a shelter for old age, or by smoothing its deathbed pillow. “Without natural affection,” is one portion of that dark picture which inspiration draws of the soul when it is left, in its poor pride, to its own resources ; but that portion of the picture is effaced when the Saviour “has made all things new.”

then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of the city, and unto the gate of his place : and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious ; he will not obey our voice ; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die : so shalt thou put evil away from among you ; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.”—Deut. xxi. 18–21.

## EXAMPLES.

It would not be easy to find a better illustration of a son's dutifulness and its results than the history of George Washington supplies. His father died when he was little more than twelve years of age; but his mother was able to take his place in the training of her son. The future leader of victorious armies—the first president of a vast republic—the man of many virtues, and of a piety which was both all-pervasive and beautifully serene, owed nearly all that he was to his mother; but it was because he dutifully surrendered himself to her control. A judge-like calmness, and a dauntless intrepidity, an integrity which could not be bribed, and a modesty which gladly sought the shade whenever duty permitted, rendered him unquestionably one of the foremost men of all time,—and that, it has often been stated, was the result of his mother's pains and counsels. When young Washington would have entered the British navy as a midshipman, at the age of fifteen, she interfered, and, though that mode of life was his favourite, he at once gave up his cherished pursuit at the bidding of filial affection.

And Washington had his reward. He became the founder of the American Republic. He was honoured to display a virtue such as too few of the sons of men have evinced, and to accomplish results such as only one man in many ages can achieve. Had he been undutiful, had he disregarded his mother's counsel or trampled on her affection, his name might at this moment have been utterly unknown. But he yielded to her guidance, and his example speaks trumpet-tongued to the sons of every age and land.



The son of Howard the philanthropist might be mentioned as furnishing a case where vice triumphed at once over soul and body ; but we briefly cite that of the son of Andrew Fuller, a minister of Christ whose praise is in all the churches. That youth was placed in London, but soon acted in such a manner there as "almost broke his parent's heart." He had accordingly to be removed,—and Kettering, where his father lived and laboured, again became his home. There, however, he could not long remain : he enlisted, was discharged, found some new employment—and enlisted again. At his own solicitation his discharge was purchased ; and when all hopes of amendment had proved clouds without rain, he was placed on board a merchant ship. From that, however, he ran away—was caught, punished, and dismissed. When on the eve of entering upon a new pursuit, he enlisted for the third time ; and then died at sea of a lingering illness, while still in early years. Now, such a case is at least moral madness, and shews the gulf into which the young are sure to plunge when parental lessons and prayers are unheeded.

In regard to the influence of brother upon brother, the example of Richard Hill, a brother of the more celebrated Rowland, might be studied with profit. Grace had early impressed him with the heavenly wisdom, and he soon began to seek the good of all around him. Rowland and another brother were then at Eton ; and there Richard addressed them in a style at once so brotherly and so Christian as to raise their heart in the highest sense—that is, to God. It was then that Rowland was converted ; and for nearly three quarters of a century he proved to thousands upon thou-

sands the blessedness which may flow from the right discharge of a son's and a brother's duties. That a boy of singular buoyancy of spirit—amid the gambols and the daring of Eton, should thus be born of God, seems surely an invitation to other brothers to be instant, as Sir Richard Hill was with Rowland.

It would be difficult to find a better illustration of a right filial condition than the case of George Canning supplies. It is well known that his birth was not of elevated rank ; but even after his genius had raised him to greatness, he never forgot the mother who bore him. As soon as his resources allowed, he made provision for her support ; and even when he represented the Sovereign of Britain at a foreign court, he did not forget to write a weekly letter to his mother. It is said that, with all his kindness and care, he could never elevate her above her original tastes and habits ; but, though she could not ascend to him, he could gracefully go down to her ; and he was in the habit of withdrawing at times from the cares of office, and resorting to Bath to visit her and her humble associates, his cousins, and friends. Even while his fame was at the brightest, he would walk out with his plebeian relatives there, or receive the visits of the titled in their company. There might be pride in that, or there may be exaggeration in the narrative, but, after making full allowance for both of these influences, the case of George Canning—the poet, the wit, the orator, the ambassador, the statesman, the prime minister of Great Britain—tells us where a son's heart should be. When such clinging affections are the work of grace, they form the groundwork of man's best nobility.

Or, to illustrate further the position of sons, and the

influence of sons and brothers, we might advert to many a scriptural case. In the days of Adam, of Isaac, and of David, such instances appear. On the one hand, parents and kinsmen are made glad ; on the other, they are crushed and confounded—while all seems to re-echo the words of Wisdom : “ My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother : bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee ; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee ; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp ; and the law is light ; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.”\* Were these maxims laid up in the heart, Home would be happy indeed : it would become that centre of blessedness which God designed it to be. That Son who is at once the Model and the Lord of all—the Son of God—would be enthroned, and “ the Brightness of the Father’s glory ” would shed a light beyond that of sunbeams upon the hearts of the sons of men.

\* Proverbs vi. 20-23.

## CHAPTER XL

## DAUGHTERS.

Their Education—Abuses—Accomplishments—The Mistress of a Home—Reformation needed—Who must Promote it—Influence of Daughters at Home—Friendships—Intercourse of Brothers and Sisters—Lord Byron—Examples—Mary Wollstonecroft—Madame de Stael—Mira S——.

IN some respects the training of our daughters ranks among the least creditable portions of our social system. \*If wisdom consists in the adaptation of right means to a right end, we cannot always trace such wisdom in that training. Christian principle, engrafted upon prevailing customs, may do much to remedy existing evils, but that many do exist is painfully certain.

If we saw the custodier of some precious gem engrossed with the casket which contained it, but heedless of the costly contents, could we admire his watchfulness or wisdom ?

If we saw the owner of some princely palace enraptured with its stuccoes or its gilding, but blind to all its symmetry or grandeur, could either his skill or his taste be praised ?

If we saw a person, mature in years, engrossed with the toys of children, when some weighty matters were soliciting his thoughts, could we approve of his preference, and call his folly prudent ?

Yet all these find a parallel in the treatment of many of the daughters of this land regarding education. In past

years at least, and in many places still, the glare of external appearance has taken precedence of the training which moulds the heart and soul. Indeed the soul is not seldom sacrificed to the body. The immortal and the spiritual are overlaid by the conventional, and the frivolity of girlhood has only been perpetuated by the lessons and the discipline which should have fitted it for moulding the minds of the future. The real business of life is often utterly omitted in the training which pretends to fit our daughters for it; hence the urgent need of the caution given, among many others, by a judicious father to his daughter on the eve of marriage:—"From the hour you marry," he says, "you assume the character of a matron: be not a childish, girlish wife: the vows of God are upon you: sustain their gravity and prudence in all things." But, true as that is, too rarely are wise or scriptural means employed to train such future matrons.

Accomplishments are not to be undervalued, when they are worthy of the name. Let them be carried as far as is consistent with the attention which is due to still higher interests; but, for the sake of all Home happiness, let not such things overlay those qualifications which the real duties of life demand. He who looks at this subject with the eye of a Christian cannot fail to notice, that interests the most precious are often sacrificed in the training of daughters. Before they can be of use, when they occupy the places which God may assign them in the future, they must unlearn much of what once engrossed their whole soul. The frivolous, the merely showy, have largely overlaid the useful; but hear a woman on what is peculiarly a woman's topic.

Speaking of the education of girls, one has boldly said:—

"Have any means, direct or indirect, prepared her for her duties as the mistress of a Home? No; but she is a linguist, a pianist, graceful, and admired! But what is that to the purpose? The grand evil of such education is mistaking means for ends—a common error, and the source of half the moral confusion existing in the world: it is the substitution of a part for the whole. The time when young women enter upon life is the one point to which all plans of education tend, and at which they all terminate, and to prepare them for that point is the object of their training. But is it not cruel thus to lay up for them a store of future wretchedness, by an education which has no period in view but one—a very short one—and the most unimportant and irresponsible of the whole life—the period between leaving school and marriage? Who that has the power of choice would choose to buy the admiration of the world for a few short years, with the happiness of a whole life?"

Yet such is the training of many a daughter, too often for lifelong uselessness, perhaps lifelong discomfort. And with such training, it must seem a marvel that homes are not the abodes of wretchedness more frequently than they are. There are, no doubt, many things to counteract these evils. The hard schooling of necessity—encountering the stern realities of life, or the all-surpassing power of affection, may help to surmount many a trial, or supplement many a shortcoming. But parents who love their daughters should wisely consider the evils now named. Can they be reformed? Then let them be so by the influence of Maternal Associations, or any other appliance to which the Word of God and the love of Christian mothers may direct. But are we chained down by some iron necessity? Nothing less can exculpate us for con-

tinuing the systems of training which have too widely and too long prevailed. A single generation of Christian mothers, thoroughly, wisely, and resolutely alive to the right education of their daughters, would mitigate such abuses. That revolution must begin with mothers—with such mothers as dare to be singular that their daughters may be happy—so singular as to prefer the solid to the showy, or the useful to the encumbering. “Let the period for training parents themselves arrive, especially of female education to qualify for maternal duty—and a family millennium would begin.”

But now, turning to the daughters themselves, one of their first duties at Home is to make their mother happy—to shun all that would pain or even perplex her, and the heart of that daughter is neither gentle nor generous who can ever forget what she owes to a mother's love. “Always seeking the pleasure of others, always careless of her own,” is one of the finest encomiums ever pronounced upon a daughter. True: at that period of life when dreams are realities, and realities seem dreams, this may be forgotten. Mothers may find only labour and sorrow where they had a right to expect repose; but the daughter who would make her home and her mother happy, should learn betimes that, next to duty to God our Saviour, comes duty to her who is always the first to rejoice in our joy, and to weep when we weep. Of all the proofs of heartlessness which youth can give, the strongest is indifference to a mother's happiness or sorrow.

We need expect none of these things, however, unless the truth as it is in Jesus reign in the heart. Natural affection is lovely; but one strong natural feeling may extinguish another; and hence the love of folly may overlay the love of a mother even in a daughter's soul. It is the love of Christ

constraining—that love which the Spirit of God produces, that must rectify or rule all, and without that the young heart is a ship without either pilot, helm, or sail.

We should not neglect to mention here the necessity of attending to household economy in all its departments. There are wise sayings afloat which shew how far such things are needed to make home happy, and the confusion, the discomfort, in some cases the poverty, or perhaps the bankruptcy of Home, can be traced to the want of such humble household acquirements. The frivolous girl who could heartlessly occasion tears to her mother will probably prove as heartless a wife, and will perhaps see into the depths of her folly only when her own misguided children retaliate upon her, with interest, the misery occasioned to her parent. At all events, the daughter who neglects the useful and the practical for the merely glaring in education, is preparing to be a burden or a plague.

Friendship is another subject which should be considered with care in regard to daughters. It is often tender and beautiful among them. Their ductile nature, and their kindly, genial feelings render their attachments warm, and it is one of the pleasures of life to mark the ardour with which one young soul often clings to another. Yet there is peril even here. Who has not seen the effects of too ardent friendships with ill-sorted natures? Petulance or vanity has thus been fostered when it should have been repressed, and the root of the evil has been some flippant but admired friend. There are few who can review their youthful days, with a believer's eyes, without noticing or deploring such results of early friendship.

Or farther: the intercourse of brothers and sisters forms



another important element in the happy influences of Home. A boisterous or a selfish boy may try to domineer over the weaker or more dependent girl ; but, generally, the latter exerts a softening, sweetening charm. The brother animates and heartens : the sister mollifies, tames, refines. The vine-tree and its sustaining elm are the emblems of such a relation—and by such agencies, our “sons may become like plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters like corner-stones polished after the similitude of a temple.” Among Lord Byron’s early miseries, the terms on which he lived with his mother helped to sour the majestic moral ruin—he was chafed and distempered thereby. The outbreaks of her passion, and the unbridled impetuosity of his, made their companionship uncongenial, and at length drove them far apart. But Byron found a compensating power in the friendship of his sister, and to her he often turned amid his wanderings, or his misanthropy and guilt, as an exile turns to his home. “A world to roam in and a home with thee,” were words which embodied the feelings of his void and aching heart, when all else that is lovely appeared to have faded away. He had plunged into the pleasures of sin till he was sated, wretched, and self-consumed—the very Sardanapalus of vice. But “his sister, his sweet sister,” still shone like the morning star of memory upon his dark soul. She had power when God appeared to have none, and such are the latent influences of Home, had we skill or tact to develope them. How true, then, the simple appeal—

“Thou hast thy mission, daughter mine,  
A joyous one it is—  
To light that happy home of thine  
With pure domestic bliss.”

On this subject another suggestion occurs, bearing upon

the beatitude of Home. It frequently happens that the one or the other parent is left widowed and alone. Perhaps disease as well as sorrow darkens the closing days of the survivor, while poverty may consummate the woe. Now of all the sights of moral beauty which can meet the eye, one of the loveliest is to see a daughter foregoing all other pleasures that she may minister to such a stricken parent. She who fed her imprisoned father through the gratings of his dungeon, where he had been left to die, with the milk which should have nourished her child, stands forth in history as one of the queens of mankind; but even in more lowly exhibitions of such affection, we may see much that is redeeming; and few can enter the abodes of sorrow, where such sights may be witnessed, without feeling that these spots are sacred. God is twice there. He is there in the sorrow or the malady, and there in the grace which soothes the aching heart or fills up the void which death has occasioned.

## EXAMPLES.

In these and other references to the right training of daughters, no allusion is made to the pratings about the "Rights of Woman," in which some have indulged. Mary Wollstonecroft, for instance, became the champion of her sex, and said that woman was as competent as man to share the lofty functions which he arrogates, while physical strength is his only superiority. But her unhappy and ill-conditioned life did not enforce her claims, and the question which she raised would never have been heard had the Word of God been her guide.

Trying, then, to make it ours, we observe that one of the most remarkable women that ever lived was Madame de

Stael, the favourite of emperors and kings, and so influential that one who subdued the half of Europe did not feel at ease while she was at large in his empire. She was invited to sojourn at court after court during her exile ; she was eulogized as one of the wonders of her age, and her genius and her powers were such as left her no rival ; not a few deferred to Madame de Stael who would have deferred to none besides.

Now, among the strong feelings which regulated her conduct, and alternately convulsed and gladdened her soul, was her love for her father. It was, indeed, a passion, and if ever a woman had an idol, Madame de Stael found one in him. Everything connected with M. Necker was equally perfect in her eyes. The thought of losing him by death haunted her like a mania, and when he actually died, she seemed for a time a monomaniac indeed ; she fancied that her means of support had perished with him ; that her domestics had conspired to ruin her ; and felt as if the world had become a dreary abode since her father was removed.

Now, such affection is beautiful exceedingly. To see a soul so strong swayed by a love so deep, becomes a model for imitation : were it common, this world would be happier and our homes more blessed. It must be added, however, that there is little in the life of this affectionate daughter to shew that she ever knew the religion of the New Testament, the faith of the "strong Son of God." Her filial affection was, in consequence, an impetuous passion rather than a holy principle ;—hence the misery in which it ended. With all her genius and her fame, Madame de Stael is, in some respects, a beacon for daughters :—she warns them what to shun. Reverence for her father's name, and strong desires for his

earthly glory were more influential in her mind than the love of our Father who is in heaven; and such misplaced feelings can never lead to happiness. Nay, home must be wretched—it is a blank, a void, when God our Saviour does not hold the first and highest place; and all training, all discipline, or human affection which does not tend to that result, will perish like the things of earth.

Again; in Isaac Taylor's Memoir of his sister, the story of another daughter is touchingly told. Her father was a physician, and died when his daughter was young. Her sole guardian, therefore, was her widowed mother, and she was not sufficiently decided to withstand the power of evil in the mind of an impulsive daughter. That daughter soon chose for her associates the godless and the gay, and cast aside the restraints of religion. She deemed them prejudices, and, in the pride which is ever based upon ignorance, claimed the right to "think for herself." In doing so, however, she forgot that her God had already both thought and decided for her; and when she had once swerved from the "old paths," "the narrow way," her moral descent was rapid. A father's memory and a mother's wishes lost their power; they were like flax to flame when selfwill goaded this daughter. She speedily grew strong in her contempt for the truth which her parents had taught her, as well as for all who held it, and was manifestly in the toils of the destroyer. Her new opinions operated like the poison cup of Circe, which transformed those who drank of it into beasts. She gradually became a sceptic, confessedly irreligious in her tastes and habits, and enamoured at once of folly and of ruin. "Masked Deism" took the place of the truth of God, and Reason was the only divinity that was owned, but owned

only to be outraged. A mother's affectionate heart was consigned by that daughter to distress, and a father's memory was trampled in the dust, that she might "think for herself"—that is, rush along the world's path.

But an early death came to arrest her. She saw at length to what her opinions and her conduct tended, and died imploring her sisters to be "saved in God's way." The Bible, which had long been discarded, was resumed, and though the judgment day must come ere any one may pronounce on the eternal portion of Mira S——, her case sheds a lurid light upon the path of daughters. How feeble is filial affection against the impetuous love of sin!

How sure the misery of her who rejects the counsels of a Christian mother!

How vain are all acquirements and all accomplishments and gifts, when the mind of the world is preferred to the mind of the Redeemer!

In the homes where such misguided daughters dwell, to what can their conduct lead but woe and lamentation, to broken hearts, and blighted hopes, and ruined souls, to parents smitten to the dust—perhaps hurried by grief to the grave!

## CHAPTER XII.

## MASTERS.

Disorganisation of Society—Consequent Evils—The Remedy—Scriptural Views of a Master's Duty—Moses—The Prophets—The New Testament—Mercenary Ties—Their Results—Maxims for Masters—Examples—Abraham and his Household—A Servant's Monument—John Howard—Philip Henry.

HALF the social evils of our day would be remedied were the relations between the different classes of society put right. On the one hand, there is often a haughty insolence, as if inferiors in rank were also inferiors in nature and destiny. On the other hand, there is as often a scowling defiance or a lawless aggression, as if the rich were a legitimate prey to the poor. In this manner society is dislocated and distempered; it seems to bleed at many a pore. A wide gulph is placed between those who should be mutually aiding, and neither of whom can dispense with the other. It has become the great question of our day how this overgrown evil can be remedied; and philanthropists of the highest type, with some nobles of the land, aided by royalty itself, have lent their assistance to solve the social problem.

But we now point to a remedy which would widely succeed or supersede all others, were men wise enough to adopt it. That remedy simply is—Work out the will of God in our homes, or take advantage of the domestic constitution. We undervalue no right appliance for accomplishing

a right end, and would enlist every agency which a wise benevolence can suggest; but all antidotes to our social evils will prove superficial and abortive if they ignore the divine method, and therefore leave the root of the evil untouched. All merely local treatment will prove deceptive. What is needed is a radical, an organic, a constitutional treatment—the change must begin in men's homes; and not merely so, but must moreover be directed by the will and the wisdom of God.

And the great fountain of all social truth—the Word of God—is very explicit as to the duties of masters. In what is perhaps the most ancient book in the world—the History of Job—we find a beautiful illustration of this. That patriarch, amid the anguish which he endured, once exclaimed, "If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?"\* The much-tried man thus recognises two important principles in the heavenly jurisprudence: first, the equal rights of all; and secondly, the fact that there is a righteous judge of all; and were these two truths habitually ascendant, home would be happy; our social distempers would be diminished; a thorough remedy would be found for many an evil which now eats as doth a canker.

But we have explicit legislation upon this subject, for Moses carefully enacted thus: "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall

\* Job xxxi. 13, 14.

the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee."\* Now everything here is in perfect keeping with the religion of love: it is tender, considerate, and thoroughly fitted to harmonise the relation between superior and inferior. There is no haughty disregard of the interests of the poor, no repelling them as if they might safely be trodden down or treated only as serfs. Nay, their comfort is to be consulted from day to day; and just as we are not to let the sun go down upon our wrath, we are not to let him set upon us in debt to the hired servant whose wages are due.

And when we pass from Moses to the prophets, we find one of them exclaiming, "Woe unto him who . . . useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;"† or when we advance into the New Testament, we hear Inspiration once more exclaim, "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth."‡ Now everything here is fitted again to rectify much of what is wrong in our social life, to sweeten the intercourse of man with man, to lighten the burden of toil, and wipe the brow which is often wet, in terms of the primal sentence against fallen man.§ If men be disunited by selfishness, and if the strong be prone to oppress and overbear the weak, here is an antidote to that tendency: here is a medicating maxim in that religion which came to set up an empire of love, and knit men together once more

\* Deuteronomy xxiv. 14, 15.

† James v. 4.

† Jeremiah xxii. 13.

§ Genesis iii. 19.



in a holy brotherhood under the sceptre of the Prince of Peace.

Or, more explicit still: in epistle after epistle, and maxim after maxim, the duties of masters are prescribed. Remembering that the same Lord is over them and their servants, they are to "give what is just and equal," they are to "forbear threatening," they are to "continue in prayer" as the means of sweetening and sanctifying all,\* and recognising the inter-dependence of man upon man—of even the highest upon the lowest—all is to be done as under the eye of the supreme Lord, with the great white throne of judgment in view.

But how different from the spirit of these divine directions is the deportment of many a master! His relation to his servants may be of a merely mercenary nature, where all feeling of obligation is too often destroyed. Mutual confidence does not exist. The soul of the inferior is not cared for by the superior; and if they were creatures of another species, servants could not, in many a case, be more thoroughly neglected than they sometimes are. Because of such things the land mourneth. The divine constitution of Home is violated, and out of that violation an ever-widening and a noxious stream of social evils springs.

True; there are godly Homes, where servants are cared for, and where masters feel their responsibility for the souls of their domestics, as they do for those of their children. The misconduct of a servant is there felt to be a household sin, and as such is both corrected and deplored.† The Scrip-

\* Ephesians vi. 9. Colossians iv. 1, 2.

† On one occasion, the Rev. Henry Venn overheard a violent quarrel between two of his servants. Family prayers were thereupon discontinued, for in that spirit they would have been mockery on the part of those who were at strife.

tures are explained to prevent such things. Duty is carefully taught, and the burden of toil is alleviated by the pains which are taken to point the souls of all to glory and to God. Masters and servants there read together from a common statute-book—they kneel before the same throne—they pray or appeal to the same God and Saviour—and these are the dwellings of the righteous, upon which the blessing of God descends like the dew.

But are not such Homes the exceptions? Is it not true that many a servant may enter upon an engagement—may fulfil it, and see it expire, and never behold the head of that household bow the knee to God, or offer one suggestion to guide his domestics? They might indeed be devoid of souls for him, and by such neglect evil is perpetuated—it is both deepened and spread. Masters defraud their servants of that care and that counsel regarding eternity which are their due; and, though it be sad and sinful, it is natural that such servants should retaliate. Employers are thus plundered, and their property made a prey.

But far more than what is just and equal, in a material sense, is due by a master to his servant. He owes him kindness, for both of them are men. He owes him an affectionate interest in his welfare, and society must continue distempered to the core where such maxims do not reign. It is only under their guidance that our Homes can be freed from whatever is haughty and oppressive, and there is retribution in the disquietude or the injury which unprincipled domestics often occasion. That follows from the treatment which they

During their suspension Mr Venn's deportment bespoke the deepest concern, and for two days of that week he remained in his study alone, engaged in fasting and prayer. Sin was there the "abominable thing."

too frequently receive, just as the thunder-rod attracts the lightning; and though servants are guilty, in all cases, for encroaching by a jot or a tittle, upon what is their master's, the world must be guided by other principles than those which now prevail, ere ungodly superiors can expect aught but retaliation from ungodly inferiors. And the misery is deepened by the fact, that conscientious masters not seldom become the prey of servants who have acquired expertness in deception in homes where no moral restraint was known. All this eats like rust into the heart of society, and will continue to eat, till our abodes become what God in his Word designed them to be, namely, places where a Church assembles, and where prayer is wont to be made.

In glancing at this subject, the following appear to be the rules which should guide the intercourse of a master with his servant:—

1. He is to realise the fact that he has a Master in heaven. He must stand at last at a tribunal where there is no respect of persons, and answer for his conduct in this relation, as in all besides.

2. A master is to give to his servant what is just and equal. That can be enforced by human law, much more by the divine; and the Scriptures abound with frequent warnings against the violation of the rule.

- But, 3., "The just and the equal" imply far more than merely the wages which were promised in return for the servant's liberty, his time, and his strength. It is just and equal that the master should care for the servant's soul, should cautiously beware of interfering with his freedom of conscience, and should watch over his eternal interests, as a member of the family, instead of regarding him as a

stranger, a foreigner, or a chattel. Never can Home be happy—for never can it be in harmony with the mind of God, unless these be done.

4. No master need marvel though servants neglect their duty to him, if he neglects these duties to them. They are born for other destinies, whatever the lordly may think, than to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for their fellow-creatures; and if they be treated only as such, outraged nature will take revenge—not seldom a wild and a lawless one. When masters are plundered, or perhaps murdered, by their servants, the desire is often felt to know whether those masters had done their duty and told their domestics of eternity—of responsibility to God and to their fellow-men, or whether such things had been neglected in their homes.\*

## EXAMPLES.

A perfect illustration of a master's duty may be found in the case of Abraham.† That he should command his children after him to fear his God, was not very wonderful, for human affection or the parental tie binds us, in one sense, to perform that duty. But he commanded his "household" also—and we know that it must have consisted of hundreds. The father of the faithful was an Eastern emir, a prince among the people, and his retinue was royal. All these, however, Abraham commanded. "The way of the Lord" was his

\* Allusion might here have been made to the practice, all too common, of giving characters to servants, in which there is a suppression of truth—if not an assertion of falsehood—a practice which cannot but tend to evil to all the parties who are concerned.

† Gen. xviii. 19.

own guide : he made it also theirs ; and thus duty was done, for responsibility was felt. He did not fall into the error of expecting others to do what was right to him while he did what was wrong to them ; and had Abraham lived in our day, the outcry which is heard so often against unfaithful servants would not have been increased by him. No doubt, the complaints of many a Home regarding the deceptions, the hypocrisies, and the dishonesty of servants betray some deep-seated disease, but they do not explain the cause of it ; and masters, to some extent at least, have the cure in their own hands. Let them act, then, as Abraham did, and lead their household in the way of God : let them care for souls—let master and servant together honour the one Master who is in heaven—then will the sore evil begin to be remedied—a balm will be applied to a deep and a bleeding wound.

But on the other hand, are such things ignored ? Is the example of Abraham recorded and commended in vain ? Do masters suppose that their duty is done when they have given food, shelter, wages, and, perhaps, a livery to their servants ? Is the soul uncared for and untaught ? Then let no masters wonder though their property be pillaged without a check from that conscience which they take no pains to educate. If they unite with their servants in dishonouring God, is it wonderful though these servants retaliate by dishonouring such a master ? Let God get his proper place in our homes, and righteousness will begin to preside over all.

Farther : in one of those beautiful cemeteries which surround the metropolis of Scotland, like a chain of forts erected by Death to make sure that none shall escape, a very

humble headstone, bearing the following inscription, may be found among more pretentious monuments :—

THIS STONE WAS ERECTED  
BY JAMES CARNEGIE, ESQ.,  
IN MEMORY  
OF THE FAITHFUL SERVICES  
OF JEAN BURNS  
IN HIS FAMILY,  
FOR A PERIOD OF UPWARDS  
OF FORTY YEARS.

Now, such a monument stands forth like a relic of times and habits long passed away. It speaks of kindness and regard upon the one side, of duty and respect upon the other. There is, as there should be, no blending of ranks, no effacing of distinctions, no utopian socialism, such as the lawless delight to proclaim. A servant is a servant by the appointment of Him who made a master a master. But that servant is regarded as a member of the household; her soul is cared for in common with those of all the inmates; and were such a medicating power introduced into all our homes, society would become both sounder and happier. The good old rule of family catechising would be followed by family affection.\* There would be a genial flow of kindness downward to those who are in providence below, and as kindly a response of loving, dutiful obedience upward to those who are in providence above.

And this is no theory. It is well known, for example, that John Howard and his servant were in some respects

\* One of the names given by our forefathers to family worship was significant. It was called *Family Order*.

knit to each other like brothers. Their devotions, like their perils, were in common, during their strange and eventful wanderings ; and they often felt the full blessedness of the assurance, "wherever two or three are met together, there am I in the midst of you." But it would be difficult to find a better illustration of the faithful discharge of a master's duties than the case of Philip Henry supplies. His servants were cared for, taught, prayed with, warned, or encouraged just as his children were. Every domestic, and every sojourner, when they first entered his family, had a special prayer offered on their behalf, according to their peculiar condition ; they were solemnly dedicated to God ; and that man, so great in his goodness, was in this respect, as in many others, a model to be copied with care.

At the same time all this tenderness implied no connivance at what was wrong in the conduct of Henry's inferiors.—He had at one period a man-servant whom he saw intoxicated. The offender was solemnly warned of his sin, and forgiveness for it was as solemnly implored ; but soon after the transgression, the master and the servant separated, and amid such principles and such painstaking, some received impressions under Henry's roof which went with them into eternity. They blessed God that his house had ever been their home, because they were there prepared for the services of the sanctuary on high. He acted, indeed, like David, and would not let the worker of iniquity dwell with him, unless the delinquent were also a penitent ; yet few of Henry's servants ever left his home till they went to their own as married people, and so kindly was his rule over them all that after some of them had become widows, they "returned to his service again, saying, 'Master, it is good for

us to be here.'” Were such procedure general on the part of masters, as the Word of God requires, the sorrows of servitude would be lessened, its temptations would be fewer, and the complaints, now so numerous and loud, regarding the unfaithfulness of servants, would cease to be heard. Masters, we repeat again and again, have the cure in their own hands. Let the Word of God preside over all our homes, and then even the ungodly may at least be shamed into integrity and truth.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## SERVANTS.

The Bible and its Beauties—The Laws of Britain—The Law of God—Roman Fish-pools—The Saviour in the form of a Servant—The Lessons of Scripture—Servants of Christ—Adorning Christ's Doctrine—A Servant's Trials—And Richness—Rules for Servants—1. Be Honest—2. Be Truthful—3. Be Courteous—4. Be Economical—5. Be no Tale-bearer—6. Serve the Lord Christ.—*Examples*, Ruth Clark—Other Servants.

If it be beautiful to see the various tints of the autumn landscape, or the blended yet distinct hues of the rainbow, or the diversified yet always lovely flowers of summer, it is not less pleasing to the moral eye to trace the exquisite and endlessly varied adaptations of Scripture to the different classes and characters of men. Kings upon the throne, and peasants in their cabin—the lordly and the menial—the millionaire and the pauper—the man who grasps a baton and he who wields a hammer—are equally cared for, equally taught their duty, equally warned of their danger, or equally encouraged amid the difficulties of their lot. The same Omniscience plans: the same Omnipotence executes—for the rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the disposer of them all. The statutes of Great Britain are said to fill twenty folio volumes, besides the endless precedents and decisions which constitute our Common Law. But the legislation of heaven is all contained in one little volume, which can be easily carried about our persons; nay, that legislation is condensed into ten commandments, called, "The ten words

of God,"—which at once describe, and, in principle, define, the duties of all in every age, in every land and rank.

But there are still finer shades of beauty in the heavenly legislation. It is very definite in regard to the condition of servants; for the Spirit of love, who gave us the Bible, knew that their lot is often a hard one. When the Christian's Book was written, they might even be slaves—the purchased property of their masters, who could, in some cases, doom them to death, without a challenge or a charge. He who has visited the remains of the Fish-pools on the shores of the Mediterranean, near Naples, where the ancient voluptuaries of Rome are said to have fed their favourite fish with the flesh of slaves, will at once understand how dark must have been the lot of many a servant, about the time when the New Testament was written.

Now the Spirit of love knew all these things, and there are tokens of such knowledge in many a passage of His book. Where trials abound, the antidote is as copiously supplied, and there are lessons upon lessons for servants, designed to elevate and soothe the soul, whatever might befall the body. Some touching portions of Scripture are accordingly addressed to this class. To console, to cheer, and purify, they are spoken of in language such as occurs in no other case.

For, first, the Saviour of the lost "took on him the form of a servant." None so lowly, but he is down at their level—none so despised, but he was yet more so. In all depths, in all disrespects, in all hours of trial, servants may be solaced by the thought—"Socially, the Redeemer was as I am; he became poor for his people's sake,—so poor that he had not where to lay his head."

But, secondly, the Word of God is very explicit in an-

nouncing, and as cogent in enforcing, the duty of servants ; it is done in line upon line, by precept upon precept, and among the crowd of considerations which commend the Word to the warm welcome of men, its painstaking in this respect is one. "Servants," it says, "be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers ; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ; with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men : knowing, that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."\* Again,—“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers ; but in singleness of heart, fearing God : and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men ; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance : for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done : and there is no respect of persons.”† And once more,—“Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things ; not answering again ; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity ; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”‡

And while the Scriptures are thus urgent regarding the duties of domestics, we should not fail to mark what is said to elevate their position—“Ye serve the Lord Christ,” has surely that tendency. High above all human contracts, binding as these are, is a Christian servant's relation to his

\* Eph. vi. 5-8.

† Col. iii. 22-25.

‡ Titus ii. 9, 10.

heavenly Master, upon heavenly terms. He has bestowed liberty upon the soul, and, as its Emancipator, he is to be honoured and served.

Or, more signal still, servants are enjoined so to act as to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." As if they could paint the lily, or adorn the rose; as if they could add some ornament to what is already altogether lovely, they are to live, and serve, and obey, so as to throw some additional attraction round the truth which Jesus taught. We say nothing of Paul's Epistle regarding Onesimus, a runaway slave, who was converted by the Apostle's means, and then sent back, a spiritual freeman, to Philemon: and only observe, that if servants can adorn Christ's doctrine, and so commend it to others, theirs is no lot to be despised. In the view of Heaven, they have, in truth, a holy mission to fulfil. No doubt, some servants care so little for these things that they do not scruple to forsake a home where God is worshipped and feared, for one where he is not—their sole inducement being some poor addition to their hire; and no one can suppose that such servants are in earnest about salvation, or care for the doctrine of God our Saviour.\* But that, by contrast, only adds fresh beauty to the Bible, with its wise directions, and merciful as wise.

But farther; the providence of God combines with His Word to shed light upon the position of servants. Society is so constituted that the happiness of home is generally at their mercy; for their waywardness spreads universal dis-

\* A Christian lady says—"We have been tried from time to time by the evident discontent of our servants with our Sabbath arrangements, and their anxiety to go out to evening sermons, though they all enter our service knowing that this indulgence is contrary to our rules. To rule a household well, and find means of doing good to servants, seems to me the most difficult problem in family life."

peace, while, on the other hand, servants who fear God have sometimes brought a hallowing influence into the homes where they dwell. They have exercised a silent but subduing power, and awed ungodly masters into deference at least, if not into sympathy. God may choose weak things to confound the mighty, and his purposes may thus be promoted by unlikely means. The beautiful consistency of a religious life, even in the lowliest sphere, cannot but impress or disarm, if it do not actually win.

Withal, however, we do not forget the trials to which servants are often exposed. The petulance of youth, combines not seldom with the imperiousness of riper years to pain them. In some cases, positive insult, in studied and deliberate forms ; in others, thanklessness ; in others, exactions such as no human strength could comply with ; in others, caprice, fretfulness and peevishness all combine to tax both energy and patience ; and who will wonder if patience sometimes have not its perfect work ? Some ill-conditioned youth may thoughtlessly occasion an amount of toil and trouble which is felt to be a tax indeed. When orders are issued with a vehemence and velocity which would require the eyes of Argos, and the hands of Briareus to meet them all, such grievances are hard to endure. Or when a superior assumes a haughty tone, and acts as if inferiors had flesh and blood only to be worn away for him, that trial also is often wellnigh intolerable, and to hear only murmurs when every effort has been made, is not less depressing. But when godly servants read the words, "answering not again," they will lay the hand upon the mouth and be silent. When they read farther, "Servants, be obedient to your masters ; not only to the good and gentle, but, also, to the

froward,"\* they will learn a deeper lesson still; and regard their trials as part of the discipline designed to prepare them for the home where the last may be first for ever.

Nor should servants decline other sources of consolation under their peculiar trials. "Few classes"—a friend of this order has said—"Few classes in modern society are so rich as domestic servants. You have no rent, no rates to pay; you need buy neither coal, nor candle, nor food, nor (clothing excepted) any of those commodities which daily tax the householder; and though your income is small, you yourself are rich, for you might easily save the half of it. Sad pity that so many squander on treats or useless trinkets the wages for which they work so hard! Would it not be nobler to do as some have done, and educate a nephew or a young brother? or do as others have done, and maintain in comfort an infirm or an aged parent? And would it not be wiser to lay up a good foundation against the coming time, and by putting aside a monthly or a yearly sum, to build a bulwark betwixt yourself and future poverty . . . . ."† We have known servants not a few who had learned to act on these maxims, and in the case of some at least, have seen reason to think better of fallen man by the refreshing beauty of their example. Some of the most touching scenes in a pastor's life, which is fast becoming a long one, have derived their moral loveliness from such a source.

Though it is not designed to furnish here any detailed directory for a servant's duty, but only to indicate the great maxims by which God over all would guide that class and every other, yet at this point, one or two suggestions may be submitted for their guidance.

\* 1 Pet., ii, 18.

† "The Happy Home," by Dr James Hamilton.

And, first. *Be ever honest*—sternly, strictly honest. The veriest trifle which belongs to your master, cannot, of course, belong to you, except by his clear and unequivocal gift. You do not need to purloin some precious gem, or some much-prized volume, or some coveted garment, to constitute yourselves dishonest and unchristian. Nay, pilfer, and you have already begun to pillage; appropriate any trifle, and you are at heart a thief. Do not forget it, for it is the truth of God. Had He swerved by only a jot or a tittle from His holy law in redeeming sinners, He would have become the unholy. But He did not. His law in every fragment was upheld; the Saviour magnified it all, and the same principle should regulate the conduct of man to man. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is great.

Secondly. *Be truthful*—at all times, and at all hazards, be truthful, and remember the welcome which awaits the “good and faithful servant” at the final day. This, and some other duties relate not merely to the intercourse of master and servant, but also of one servant with another; and the fear of God should regulate every relation or preside over every duty. Bear in mind, then, that it was a lie that ruined our world. It is by lies that he who was a liar from the beginning perpetuates his own reign, and therefore man’s misery; and you give painful evidence that you are already in his power, if you can be a deceiver for any purpose whatever. On the other hand, your integrity is your own wealth and honour, while it is your family’s renown. Between master and servant, truth is a sacred bond: between servant and servant it is peace; it sweetens and it strengthens all; it is sunbeams alike in the cottage and the castle, while to rank among liars is to share the character of the meanest.

Thirdly. *Be courteous.* The rude and the insolent are always the shunned. Never forget, then, the counsel of the wisest man—"He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured;" and you have the highest authority for counting your master worthy of all honour. Since the religion of the Saviour enjoins us to be courteous, "the golden coin of courtesy" should circulate freely, and your religion is not thoroughly His, if you forget what is due either to your master or to your fellow-servants.

Fourthly. *Be economical.* A minister of religion, more remarkable for his wit than his knowledge of Christ's gospel, once asked—"Have you ever observed what a dislike servants have to anything cheap? They hate saving their employer's money." Now, there is truth in the witticism, and no observer can have failed to notice how lavish servants often are, or how rarely they use their master's means as carefully as they would use their own. And in such a case, profusion is dishonesty. A servant who makes God's religion his guide, will watch with scrupulous care over all that belongs to his employer. He will remember that, in one sense, a servant is a trustee, and that when he is lavish he violates a trust, and is therefore dishonest and something more. Enthroned right principle, then, in the heart, and let it be seen and read by all men, that principle in your heart is a better guarantee than locks and keys.


Fifthly. *Be no tale-bearer.* Beware how you blazon abroad what is done or spoken in the house which has become your home. The idle busy-body, the "lips of talkers," the malicious, and all who delight in scandal, or in mischief, will welcome such intelligence, and gloat over it like an epicure over a dainty. But it is, in truth, the carrion of the



mind, and they are the vultures or the ravens of society who feed on it. Let that be far from you, if you profess to be Christian servants.

Finally, and as the key-stone of all—*Serve the Lord Christ*. That is the all-pervasive rule—it is omnipresent, like him to whom it refers. Neglect it, and prove that you are none of his—obey it, and be both honoured and blessed. O, how happy might our homes become, what crowds of troubles would be for ever dislodged, did servants remember that Christ's eye is ever upon them, that his will should always guide them, and that he will judge all at last for the deeds done in the body! The soul, kept thus in harmony with God, would be in training for the harmonies of the better world. In a word, all truth upon this subject may be thus presented in compend. You are either the servants of Christ or the slaves of sin. Decide, then, between the two, by a holy and consistent walk; and rest assured that if you profess to belong to the Church of Christ, the eyes of the world are fixed upon you to watch the answer which your *conduct* gives to the question—"What do ye more than others?"

Among the tokens which prove that right principle is not, in our day, ascendant in society, the relation between master and servant is not the least painful: Some medicating influence is loudly demanded there. It has degenerated into a merely mercenary tie—a month is often its stipulated duration: sullen servitude, on the one side, and harsh exaction on the other, is its character, and all these things indicate a distempered and ill-conditioned state. Now right-minded men should set their faces like flint against this. If one party cannot confide in another for longer than a month, better far that the tie were never formed; and the master who understands his own interests, or would arrest



the downward tendency, will oppose this practice as a snare and a peril ; he will understand that a Christian domestic is a priceless blessing, a real benefactor to the household, even though its head should wear a coronet, and with that conviction, will oppose everything that tends to deteriorate or degrade that order.

## EXAMPLES.

The name of Ruth Clark is familiarly known to many as that of an eminently pious domestic. She lost both her parents about her ninth year, but even then she had begun to work for her own support, and when she was about ten years of age, her ingenuity and enterprise were the means of supporting her orphan brothers and sisters. At the age of twelve, she entered formally upon service ; though she continued for some time thereafter an unthinking, a frivolous, and a strong-passioned girl.

Ruth saw at length, however, that whatever would impede her course to a happy eternity must be abandoned ; and by the grace of God she did it. About her twentieth year, she entered into the service of a godly minister ; and though she was then destitute of all serious thoughts—so that even the worship of the family was regarded by her as a bondage—that home became the new birth-place of her soul. It was the death of her mistress which first arrested this godless woman ; and after many attempts to reform and repent in her own strength, the injunctions of her dying mistress were at length made a blessing. She was guided into the way of peace. Old habits were put away by Ruth—new and better paths were chosen, and she thenceforward grew in grace until her dying day.

And while she thus felt her obligations to her God, this servant did not neglect her duty to her earthly master. On the contrary, she was laborious, painstaking, and scrupulously faithful in the smallest matters. Through a service of thirty years' duration, she was never once suspected of dishonesty. She punctiliously kept her own place as a servant—that is, she respected both others and herself ; for, with the Word of God as her guide, she had learned to honour all to whom honour is due.

Now the secret of all this was, that Ruth Clark had become a strictly religious woman—"the Lord was about her path"—and she was therefore strong. His Word was her constant companion : she redeemed time to peruse it—and sought with great earnestness the salvation of all to whom she was related. Four nephews and nieces, who had been left destitute as she herself once was, she undertook to provide for. Moreover, she "considered the poor," according to the mind of her Lord, and was ingenious in contrivances to meet their wants. As the result, her memory was blessed, for, five-and-twenty years after she had left one of her homes, she was still spoken of there as "the wonderful servant, who seemed the mother of the whole parish."

But affliction at length became her lot, and her conduct then was what her life had promised. After the death of her revered master, the Rev. Henry Venn, Ruth was placed in a comfortable home. A life-long competency was provided for her, and she continued her work of faith for her Lord as long as she was able. While she was thus employed, her path shone more and more unto the perfect day ; and she went down to the grave at last, honoured as a servant of Christ in spirit and in truth. Her master had often thanked

God for the privilege of having Ruth Clark for his servant, and once said to his children—"Ruth is my servant here, but if your father is found at her feet at the Great Day, his place will not be a low one;" and as he who knew her best thus respected her most, so she commanded from others the homage which is sometimes paid to godliness even by ungodly men.

Or we might refer to the case of other servants, who, though not so signal in their godliness as Ruth Clark, were yet servants of Christ indeed. Sick of sin, and fleeing to the Physician—jaded in the world, and appealing to Him who is still greater than it—feeble, helpless, lost, but looking in their feebleness to Him who came to seek the lost, they have been made to triumph over sin. Earthly masters have prized and honoured them, because the love of Christ was the governing maxim in the souls of such servants, and as their hearts were right with God, their hands were upright to man. But the case of Ruth Clark may exemplify all that need be said upon this subject.—It is not lowly birth, it is not daily toil that degrades, just as it is not lordly birth that really ennobles. It is a life of sin that debases; it is a life of holiness that dignifies; and where servants lead that life, they will be honoured probably by man, but certainly by Him before whom "there is neither bond nor free," for all are "one in Christ." Ruth Clark was buried in the same grave with her honoured master—so that, living and dying, her case exemplified the remark, that "no man will despise the situation of a well-behaved servant, but a wicked man, or a fool."

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE NURSE—AND THE NURSERY.

First Impressions—Reasonable Expectations—Disappointment—The Child's First World—Its Importance—Ill qualified Nurses—Common Practices in Nurseries—Godly Nurses—Wise to win the Young—Mothers should themselves be Nurses—Examples—Rebecca's Nurse—Erena —.

THE nursery and its inmates form so important a part of Home, that they deserve or demand a separate consideration.

No man can look back upon his past history without remembering how deep and indelible were his first impressions. The first sight of a corpse has produced a solemnity of feeling which has gone with some from infancy to the grave. The first glimpse of the sea in boyhood has continued a cherished recollection through life. The first fish caught by the youthful angler has always seemed the most beautiful ; and just as the first-fruits of the Jewish harvest were consecrated as a thank-offering for all the rest, the first impressions made in our earliest years continue to influence us powerfully all through life. In the strength of this principle it has been said, that a circumnavigator of our globe is less influenced by all the nations he has seen than by his nurse.

And, in the strength of that principle also, it might be supposed that every mother who has the power, would strictly watch the character of her children's nurse. At a

stage when every look, and word, and gesture makes a deep impression—when biases are given, when prejudices are created, and enduring associations formed—surely the utmost circumspection might be expected, lest these looks or tones should be hostile to what is pure, and lovely, and good. Missionaries tell us how much they need to watch against the deadening tendencies of the idolatries which reign around them ; and can children be aught but injured by guides or guardians, who are unprincipled or unchristian ? Yet explain it as we may, it often happens that infants are placed in the hands of nurses who have trampled upon God's law themselves, and who have shewn no penitence for their fall. Risks are thus heedlessly incurred which may end in ruin, and which perhaps explain some of the precocious sins of the inmates of a nursery.

That nursery is the child's first world. It is there that the most lasting lessons are learned. In that microcosm deceit is fostered or truth is taught ; passion is pampered or it is subdued ; selfishness is restrained or it is indulged ; and, amid such budding tendencies, at such impressible moments, how firm in principle, how sound in the faith, how wise, and how loving, ought a nurse to be ! The soul should be an object of affection, even as Christ loved it. The power of sin upon the one hand, and the need of grace upon the other, should be known by the nurse. But amid the thousands who are annually employed in that capacity, there is reason to fear that, in cases not a few, not one earnest inquiry is made regarding the personal religion of her to whom the young immortal is about to be intrusted, both by day and by night, during some of the most seminal years of existence.

And thus, again, do we detect another violation of the constitution which God has assigned to Home. A mother who would shrink from inflicting a moment's pain upon her child's body, or who can scarcely be present at the most superficial operation, does not scruple for a moment to commit that child to the hands of one who has been living in sin—who gives no evidence that she cares either for the soul, or the method of its salvation. Now, this is a sore domestic evil ; and no Christian can look upon a child intrusted to such incompetency, without feeling that the sadness of earth has begun for the little one indeed—its lot may be fixed for ever by the thoughtlessness with which it is committed to such care.

Does this appear to be severe? Then consider some of the practices which are common in many a nursery.

Are not children induced to do what is right by promises which are never fulfilled nor meant to be so? Are they not scared into silence, or frightened into submission or sleep, by tales so false and monstrous that they can end in nothing but horror at the time, and early familiarity with lying?

Are not improper actions often committed before children, while they are frightened into concealment and familiarised with falsehood in another form?

Are not the ears of children often made familiar with language at which their parents *should* stand aghast?

Are not practices sometimes allowed in the parent's absence which the nurse would blush to see repeated under that parent's eye, while concealment, to which the young victim is made a party, cloaks the whole? The outcry against Jesuitical intruders into our homes is wisely loud, but is it right quietly to intrust our children to guides who are as sure to lead astray?

Are not the parent's orders frequently set aside, and the children thus practically trained to disobey?

Are not partialities common in the nursery, so that the envying and strife of this poor world are prematurely prevalent there?

Is not duty often done by the young for some reward, and that perhaps a forbidden one, instead of being done simply as a duty and as right?

Is not religion often ignored? Is there not great ignorance of the Bible in that very sanctuary where its lessons should be affectionately taught, and where He who is as the dew unto Israel should be earnestly sought to bless and to fructify the good seed sown?

But why extend the catechism? The melancholy truth is too patent, its effects are too familiarly known; and surely all this should press upon parents the necessity of appealing to the Counsellor for guidance in regard to the nurses of their children. Give some costly jewel to the dishonest to keep; try to plough, to sow, and reap the granite rock; seek stability in a sea-wave, or rest on the top of a mast; and such conduct would not be more completely opposed to sound wisdom, than to intrust a creature, undying as the Eternal, to the training of one who is herself perhaps untaught in the first rudiments of the truth. This, then, is the sum of the whole matter:—

“Select not to nurse thy darling one that may taint his innocence:

For example is a constant monitor, and good seed will die among the tares:

The arts of a strange servant have spoiled a gentle disposition.

Mother, let him learn at thy lips and be nourished at thy breast:

Character is mainly moulded by the cast of the minds that surround it.”\*

It is to be confessed, and with joy, that there are nurses who realise to the full their true position—models to whom

\* Martin F. Tupper.



the young may safely be intrusted. She was one who said, "When my child awakes in the morning, I pray that he may be prepared for the resurrection of the just. When he is bathed, my prayer is that he may be washed in the fountain opened for sin. When I dress him, I think of the seamless robe which Christ has provided, or the spotless one which the ransomed wear. And when I sing the cradle hymn, I ask that he may be one of those who 'sleep in Jesus' when they die." In that spirit, nurses may be largely honoured, for they honour God; and no doubt, when the throne is set, when the books are opened, and the secrets of all hearts made known, it will be found that some believers of this class have been owned by Him to plant in young souls the seeds of everlasting life. Such nurses have been raised up to care for children when their parents, engrossed with the midnight revel and the public show, would have left them a prey to ignorance or made them the victims of a folly as deep as their own.

Let the remark be added, that there never can be a nurse equal to a mother, if that mother be a Christian. It is one of the blessings of poverty that mothers are thereby compelled to be nurses; and those mothers neglect a large portion of their duty, as well as frustrate some of the kindest purposes of God, who desert their nursery and delegate its cares entirely to an alien. When we call to mind the fact that the mother may, in every case, wield a moulding influence through look, and tone, and smile—when we remember that she, and she alone, in all ordinary cases, can duly love and duly tend the *whole* nature of the little one, and then notice how these obligations are snapped, without any pretext of necessity, it were hard to say whether the mother or her

infant is the greater sufferer. If education begin with the first look of recognition, as we believe that it does, and if every smile and song advance it, then who that has a mother's heart would forego the pleasure of seeing the infant soul expand to such genial, sun-like influences? The power of other nurses over the young mind may be likened at the best to the tones of an *Æolian* harp—wild, unmeasured, and without lasting impression, at least for good; the mother's power to those of the organ—it awes, it thrills, it makes us "hold our breath to hear."

## EXAMPLES.

We might here appeal to the Scriptural case of the nurse of Rebecca, and tell how she followed her mistress to her new home with Isaac, nursed one generation after another, and died at last full of years and of honour; insomuch that the grief at her departure gave a new name to the place of her sepulchre—it was called "the oak of weeping."

But we pass from that example, to speak of a different case, bearing out the principles already announced. Erena —— was a Russian peasant, and in youth was addicted to all the superstitions of the Greek Church. By its forms and ceremonies she expected the salvation of her soul, and tried to work it out with a devotedness worthy of the more excellent way. But, at this stage of her history, she entered into the service of an English family at St Petersburg, though she continued her superstitions for some time, as before. At length, however, the simple truth dawned upon her: she was arrested by the family prayers. The Russian New Testament was studied, and she discovered there that it is neither by the ceremonies of superstition, nor the task-work of a

drudging devotee, but by the faith of Christ, that salvation comes to man.

From that time this woman became a devoted and an earnest Christian; and, as she could speak the German, the Finnish, and Russian languages, Erena had ample scope for manifesting a believer's love in pointing sinners to her Saviour: she, accordingly, became the means of guiding some of them to Him. But it was in her nursery that her love and large desires were signally manifested. The children were now confided to Erena without any misgiving on the part of the parents. They knew, and have recorded their conviction, that nothing improper would be taught or tolerated in their absence—the truth of God was their guarantee for that. When cholera visited the home where she dwelt, and carried off two of the children, this nurse displayed a tenderness, a watchfulness, and an affection such as only the love of Christ and of souls can produce. “Indeed, she was like a sister to us,” are the words of the bereaved father. “We had a man-servant, but he was frightened, and ran away. We had a cook, but she was supposed to be dying. Our chief support was the nurse.” At last both the father and mother were seized by the epidemic, and Erena became the earthly stay and consolation of that whole Home. Even when the disease had prostrated herself, she seemed to forget her own condition that she might take care of the other sufferers. In a word, her employers, her relatives, and all whom she could influence, were embraced in her love and remembered in her prayers. She exemplified at once the considerate wisdom, and the self-sacrificing affection which are learned at the cross—which are directed to the welfare of men—and which terminate in the glory of the crucified One.

Now, how blessed were the ~~rising~~ race, did only such nurses or such mothers tend them! How wise and prudent were it for parents to place only such guardians near their little ones! On the other hand, how unwise to leave them to the tender mercies which are often cruel!—The employers of Erena, after her emancipation from the Greek superstition, “entertained an angel unawares;” and it might often be the same, were parents conscientiously to seek what God would, no doubt, vouchsafe—a godly nurse for their children. On the other hand, if it be true that children may imbibe disease with the first aliment which nourishes them, is it less true that the soul may be affected all over by the language, the lessons, the example, the maxims, and the habits of an ungodly nurse?

## CHAPTER XV.

## "THE STRANGER WITHIN THY GATES."

Dr Chalmers—Moral Cowardice—Ashamed of our Glory—Believers—Unbelievers—  
The Safe Rule—Snares—The Pride of Life Pampered—Evil Shunned—Home a  
Centre for Good—Examples—Augustine—Philip Henry—Rev. Edward Payson  
—A Stranger made a Child.

IF the Great God, in legislating for man, made a clause in his ten commandments bear upon the conduct of strangers within our gates, that fact may well invite our attention to them.\* As some have entertained angels unawares, it is possible, upon the other hand, that some unthinking souls who sojourn in families where God is feared, may get everlasting good while there. That should at least be aimed at, if we would make our homes what the Eternal mercifully designed them to be—a fountain, or a focus of holy influences—fitting men for their eternal home.

But that it is not always easy to entertain strangers in the fear of God, is proved by the experience of not a few. All who have admired the intrepid godliness of Dr Chalmers, may have supposed that there could never be a time when his strong conscience feared the face of man. And yet his own diaries shew that even he was more than once a coward when strangers were under his roof: in other words, there was a stage in his religious progress, when even the abode of a minister of religion was regulated by the fear of man rather

\* Exod. xx. 10.

than of God. A visitor was with him for the night—and he said, "I was unmanly enough to look forward with cowardice to family worship. It is very true, that the circumstance of having no family, makes it appear in rather an awkward light among young men. I believe that upon the principle of not having my good evil spoken of, I may dispense with it on some occasions. On this subject I am not decided." Again, and on another occasion of a similar nature, he says, "Upon the idea that our guests were to stay all night, I have to record that I was distressed and had come to no determination about family worship." And once more, "Professor Leslie called and spent the night with me. I thank God for supporting me in my good determination to have family worship."

Now, these and similar remarks regarding the early period of his career as a Christian, shew that even Chalmers was ashamed of what should have been an element in his glory: they at the same time tell how firm and watchful we need to be regarding those who have turned aside as wayfarers, to tarry with us for a time. Are they believers? Then they may both bless us and get a blessing. They may be encouraged while weak, or made happier when happy. But are they unbelievers? Is the Saviour a name to them and nothing more, and are their own homes unblest by the fear of God? Then, in our homes we may be witnesses against their ways. They may be warned to set up a family altar, and so convert their Home into a munition of rocks. "I will speak of thy testimonies before kings," was the resolution of David; and in his spirit, our children and domestics should see that even though some noble of the realm had sought a temporary home with us, his presence could produce no change in the

fear and the homage which are due to the Lord of lords. The great rule in such a case is this, "Bind it continually upon thine heart—tie it about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee: when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee: when thou wakest, it shall talk with thee."\*

That such occasions as are now referred to, often become a snare and a temptation, cannot be doubted. When friendly visits and kindly intercourse pamper the hollow pride of life, or minister to men's love of detraction—when they throw incense on the altar of selfishness, and foster what should be mortified, they only augment the sins of our Homes. Religion then retires disgraced, and seeks another asylum than we offer. Home is thus perverted into a temple where Satan or the world is worshipped, and instead of the generous and the frank hospitality enjoined in the Bible,† men commit the sin of Hezekiah, when he shewed his treasures to his visitors. Like him—"The heart is lifted up with pride, and falls into the snare of the devil." Many are thus banished from the courteous intercourse of life, because the Word of God does not reign there. The maxims of His truth are not ascendant, and the soul of a believer is chafed and wearied instead of being gladdened and refreshed.

And need we tarry to tell in detail how far the Scriptures discountenance the style of intercourse which now so commonly prevails?‡ They bid us "exhort one another daily," and urge us to "have our speech always with grace, seasoned with salt." They teach us to "comfort one another," and shew us the saints of God in very degenerate times "speak-

\* Prov. vi. 21, 22.

† 1 Pet. iv. 9.

‡ On this very important but little regarded subject, see a Sermon of great and godly wisdom, by Matthew Henry, entitled, "The Right Management of Friendly Visits."

ing often one to another." They record the ancient complaint, "Shall vain words never have an end?" and exhibit Nehemiah as "weeping and mourning certain days" for the sorrows of his brethren. Now, were such a spirit of holy sympathy prevalent in our Homes, they would indeed be centres of influence for good—their inmates, whether for a night or a longer period, would find them like Elim, or like Bethel. They would discover that when the counsel of wisdom is adopted, and when we "go from the presence of a foolish man, when we perceive not in him the lips of knowledge,"\* a blessing descends upon such abodes: the Father of lights illumines them: parents, children, and domestics all discover that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom alike for a heart and a Home.

One remark more. Good may be derived from a visitor as well as advantage reaped by him. Let it be supposed that there are children in the Home. The stranger takes no interest in their doings, but stares vacantly at them amidst their highest glee. He is solemn when they are joyous, and his cold apathetic bearing would chill them could aught repress the jubilee of young hearts. Now, is it wonderful that such a man repels; or that his departure from that Home is hailed as a relief? But, on the other hand, is the visitor kindly, genial, frank, sympathetic? Does he take an interest in the sports of the young? Does he even romp when they romp, and shew them that gray hairs imply no gloom? Does he embody in his conduct the words which tell that

"He will not blush that has a father's heart,  
To take in childish plays a child-like part?"

Then how closely the children cling to him! how they imi-

\* Prov. xiv. 7.



tate him, believe him, love him, make his name a household word, and long for the day of his return! Now, were social intercourse conducted as the Word of God directs, there would be similar sympathies awakened there, and similar blessings shared by all who journey Zionward.

## EXAMPLES.

The early life of Augustine was such in itself, and led to such misery both to him and to others, that ever after his conversion to God, he felt like one who could not keep far enough apart from the world and its ways. And knowing well the sins contracted, or the snares to which men are exposed during their convivial hours, he inscribed on the walls of his guest-chamber the following golden lines :—

*“Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere famam,  
Hanc mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi.*

—By such a counsel, that resolute and intrepid believer sought to discountenance those topics which too often form the exclusive subjects of intercourse between man and man. He knew that large portions of the Word of God must be proscribed or erased ere such practices could be anything but sin ; and he would neither expose himself, nor let others beside him be exposed, to such contamination. He at least sought, as a Christian, to entertain his visitors in a Christian spirit.

And similar was the practice of Philip Henry. When he had sojourners under his roof capable of such exercises, it was his practice to hold conferences with them on subjects mutually chosen for the benefit of all. It was thus that he at once acted like a Christian minister—tried to redeem time, and to do good as he had opportunity. In other words, Henry was a Christian always, and not merely at set times,

or on set occasions, and the savour of his name is therefore as fresh this day to the hearts of some, as when he lived and lurked a persecuted man two hundred years ago. His home was a Christian home; and no man could sojourn an hour beneath his roof without discovering his spirit. Whoever heard him "full in giving thanks for family mercies, in confessing family sins, and begging family blessings," would either be rebuked for his own neglect, and provoked to do likewise, or helped on his way with joy.

But it would be difficult to find a better example of the spirit which should pervade our homes, regarding all who are there, than the practice of Edward Payson supplies. In the first place, it was agreed among the inmates, that if any of them uttered a syllable tending to the disparagement or injury of another, the rest should instantly admonish the offender. Hence evil speaking was, in time, banished from that abode, and all who entered it heard only words of kindness or commendation.

Next, it was agreed that the inmates should converse upon no topic that was likely to impede or deaden the spirit of prayer. Payson's conviction was, that men were just as much bound to pray without ceasing as to pray at all. His home was regulated according to that conviction, and instead of praying only once or twice each day, he tried to live in the spirit of prayer as a creature so dependent as man should do. All who entered his abode thus felt that to be there was good on the one hand, or a bondage on the other.

Yet, thirdly, Payson knew that the bow which is always bent might at last as well be unstrung. He therefore sought relaxation for his family, and led them to pursuits which were not directly or formally religious; and though he was

careful to invest all that he did with such a character as became the doings of a candidate for immortal life, those who sojourned in his home were not dealt with as if it were sinful to be happy. Payson rejoiced in all that was instructive, and thus commended the truth to all who came within his influence.

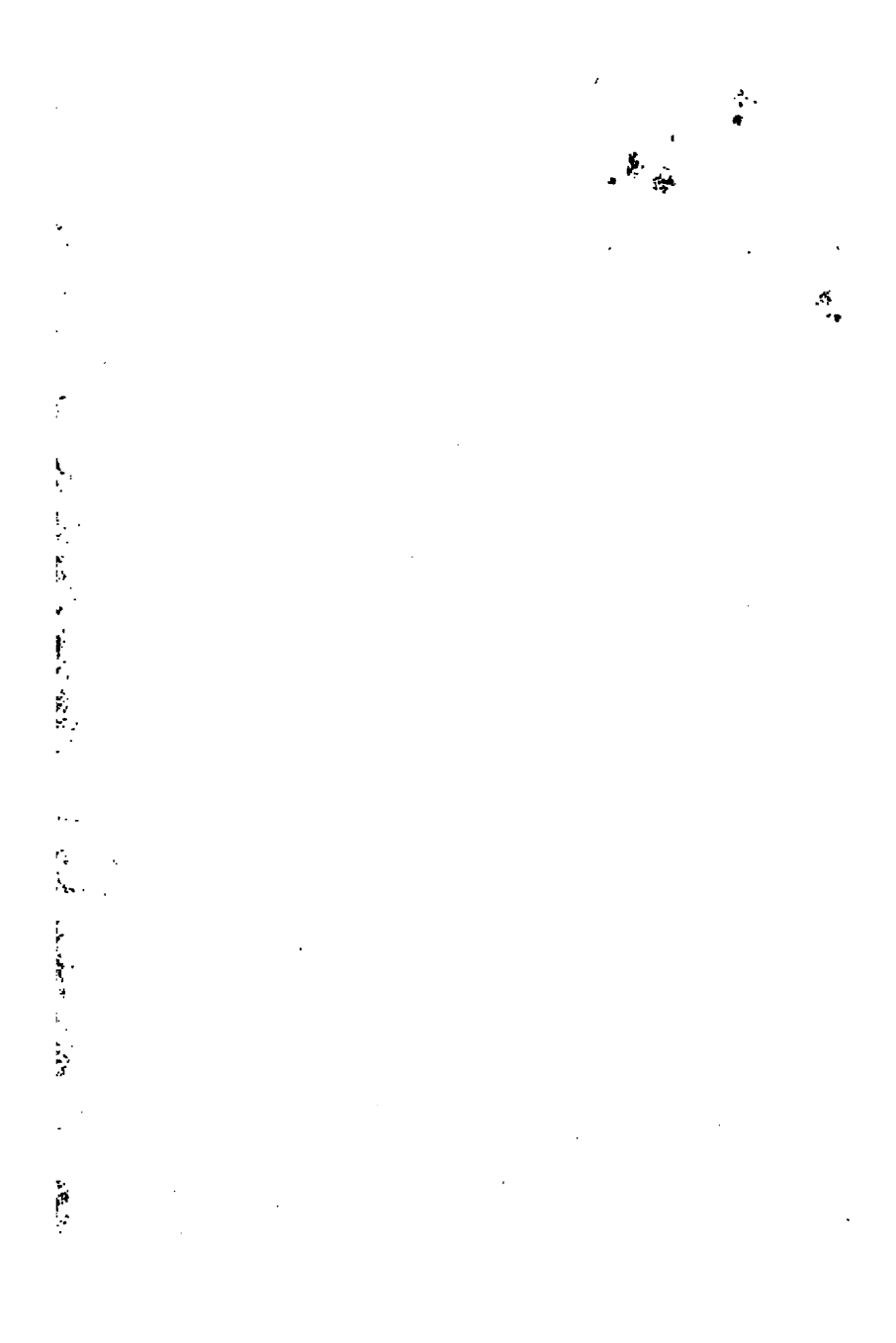
And further, when the evening closed, it was Payson's favourite custom to gather round him all who were beneath his roof, and "take a little tour up to heaven, and see what they were doing there." So serene and elevating was the joy which sometimes animated that household upon such occasions, that "they could scarcely wait till death should come to carry them home." They seemed to forget that—

"Every sleep must have its waking,  
Even the last long sleep of all."

Now these things exercised a wholesome influence over those who frequented that home; and as nothing was done there for which that Bible which we all profess to believe does not provide, why are such cases not indefinitely multiplied?—or why is Payson's example a paragon and a wonder among the homes of his native land, and of ours?

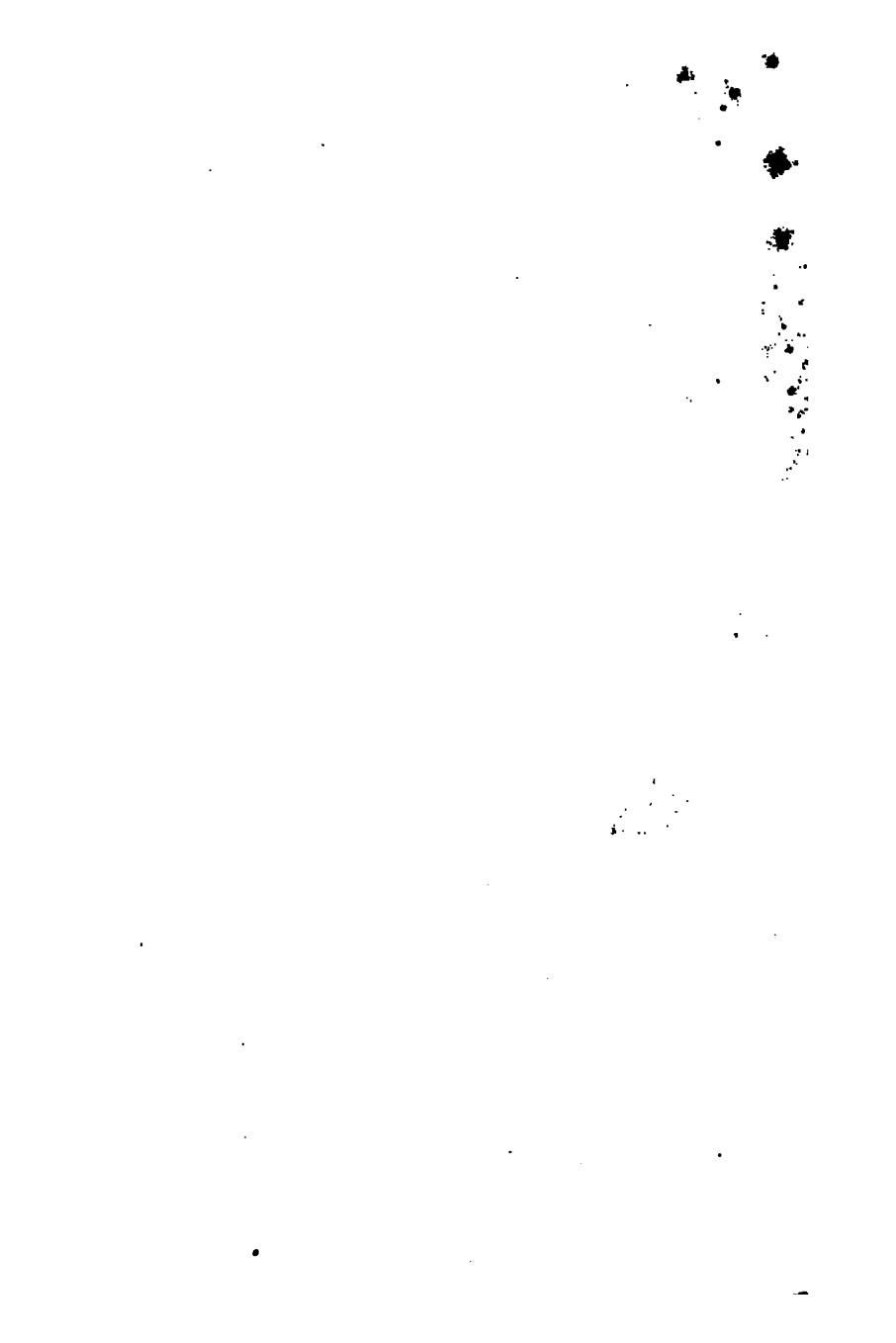
Once more:—A lawless character, an utterer of base coin, found a home for a night in the house of a charitable and a godly schoolmaster. At the hour of family worship, that Scripture was read which tells of those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and who are therefore the children of wrath. Now such intelligence fell upon the ear of that wayfarer with the freshness of perfect novelty, and at the same time, with the force of heavenly truth. He soon discovered that he was one of the class there depicted in terms so far from flattering,—

and that casual sojourn in a godly home hence became the day-dawn of a better being ; his old ways were forsaken, and he eventually turned into the narrow path. We repeat it—if some have entertained angels unawares, others have been honoured to win to Christ those who came under their roof in the character of aliens from the household of faith, or of rebels against its Head. Those who sought but a temporary home have found at least the porch of “the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”



**PART II.**

**THE LAWS AND MAXIMS OF HOME.**



## PART II.—THE LAWS AND MAXIMS OF HOME.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE RELIGION OF HOME.

**Astronomy—Self-Knowledge—Religion Ignored—The Wise of this World—Infidelity—Results—The Family designed for God's Worship—The Conscience of Home—The Impressibleness of Youth—Aspects of Home Religion—Its Pleasures—Family Worship—Sir Walter Scott—Robert Burns—Remembrance of a Father's Prayers—Examples—Rev. Richard Cecil—His Maxims on Family Prayer—Rev. Matthew Henry—His Maxims.**

No one can doubt that Astronomy is a noble science. As we study it, star after star and system after system become familiarly known, till we feel as if we were on the verge of grasping the infinite, or knowing the Almighty's handiwork unto perfection.

At the same time, it is sad to notice how versant a man may be with that kind of knowledge, far off as it seems, and yet remain ignorant of himself. All various knowledge, no doubt, is to be cultivated, that man may rise to his true dignity; but to pursue other branches to the neglect of the only two which are of universal importance—the knowledge of God, and of our own soul—is surely to be wisely foolish and ignorantly learned.

Now, Home is the peculiar school for studying both God and our own souls. First the family and then the Church are the divinely appointed institutions for that end, and the success of the latter mainly depends upon the right ordering of the former. Hence arises the necessity of providing with care for the Religion of Home.



Yet there are homes where religion is ignored. There is no worship of God there ; neither is there any right religious training of the young ; God is practically dethroned ; and it is possible that what is called Education may be completed, and yet no religion taught. Nay, men professing to be wise, have risen up to argue that religion should not be taught at all—it should be left, they say, to the unbiassed mind of youth to select the form or the creed which seems best, when entering upon life. Some of these men are called philosophers ; not a few of them hold the rank of lawgivers ; and their plan is practically this :—Educate for earth ; let heaven alone : Educate for man ; leave God out of view : Educate for time ; eternity will be considered anon.\*

But how different all this is from the mind of “ God only wise ” need not be told. It is sheer infidelity : the Old Testament and the New are alike dishonoured by the system. Creation is studied ; the Creator is neglected. Laws are examined : the Lawgiver is unheeded. Even parents connive at and encourage such views ; and since they choose to train their children in ignorance of a Father who is in heaven, or of the worship which is His due, would it be wonderful though such children grew up despising the parents who had trained them so ? If more pains be taken to teach our children the length of a Greek syllable, some one has said, than the knowledge of God and of themselves, what

\* The history of education in Germany during the past century may illustrate this. Rousseau's *Emile* introduced a system in which religion, family, community, and native land, were ignored. Pestalozzi, of Yverdun, superseded that system, to the extent of educating children for the family, the community, and the God of the universe. From Pestalozzi's system two branches diverge—the German pedagogy and the Christian. The former rejected religion as an element in education. The latter makes the Cross the centre of education as of all besides—and this is now ascendant in the many-minded land.

wonder though ungodliness prevail?—What would be the effect were the sun swept from his place among the stars? Chaos to our globe once more; and, in like manner, when religion is omitted in training a moral being, a moral chaos must ensue. The great central power is truth—the truth of God; and wherever that is obscured, confusion must result.\* The time once was when the Ptolemaic philosophers affected to govern the stars by their cycles and epicycles endless. But did the sun and moon ever obey them? No more will they who understand at all that man has a soul submit to be guided by systems which do what mortals can to dethrone and displace the Supreme.

The truth is, that Home, or the family, is a divine institution expressly designed for training children in the knowledge of God, for if it be true that “the Church is a family,” it is conversely as true that a family should be a church. Religion is the conscience of Home; and the well-being of every household as completely depends upon the supremacy of the truth, as our individual well-being depends on the ascendancy of conscience. Had we been left to grope after

“An unknown somewhere,  
Some strange hereafter, or some hidden skies,”

it **might have** been irksome to be pressed with so dubious a creed. But as all is authoritative and clear, God’s truth is to control our homes in thought, word, and deed. Old and young are to be gathered round its altar. The father-priest, as we have seen, by his lessons, his example, and his prayers, is to guide all to God; to knit, if possible, the

\* “The Tyrolese, one of the noblest and bravest races in the world, send nineteen-twentieths of their children to school, yet give more occupation to Austrian judges than all the other provinces of the empire, except Dalmatia.”—See ‘Good, Better, Best,’ chap. xii.

young soul to Him, and accustom it to think of Him, like one philosopher at least,\* who never pronounced the holy name without a pause for reverent thought and feeling. "Heaven is nearer to us in infancy than ever after"—"While the Father is yet marking the moment of its birth, the infant's first pulse has dated its training for eternity,"† and sentiments like these should reign in every parent's heart, to preside over every engagement, every joy, and every event in his home. The Rev. Legh Richmond said all this well when he wrote to his son :—"If you are to die a boy, you must look for a boy's religion, a boy's knowledge, a boy's faith, a boy's Saviour, and a boy's salvation ; or else a boy's ignorance, a boy's obstinacy, a boy's unbelief, a boy's idolatry, a boy's destruction."

The laws of the young mind assert the same doctrine. How impressible that mind is we have already seen ; and surely wisdom and affection combine to teach us that in youth—in youth, above all other periods—should truth be lodged in the mind, and tended there by the hand of parental wisdom—like southern exotics from northern skies. Even then, no doubt, truth may make no more impression on the mind than an image produces on the mirror which reflects it ; yet, while parents act in faith and hope, it would be at once unwise and cruel to withhold that mightiest of all influences, the truth, which the Spirit blesses to mould the soul, or give happiness instead of misery, and life instead of death. Scripture is so full of the home feeling, or family religion, that we violate all its teaching if the love of God be not paramount, and the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom to our children. The Christian mother especially can

\* The Hon. Robert Boyle.

† See "Patriarchy," chap. ix.

deeply plant and genially cherish the seeds of truth. Is her child sick? That is a text from which to speak of the Great Physician. Is it the sober calm of evening, when even children grow sedate? She can tell of the Home where there is no night. Is it morning, when all are buoyantly happy? The eternal day is suggested, and its glories may be told. That is the wisdom which wins souls even more than the formal lesson, the lecture, or the task.

To illustrate all this. At our baptism, the name of Father, of Son, and Spirit, pronounced over a child, surely indicates at once the influences which should guide its first dawning thoughts. And, when we begin to lisp our first prayer, "Our Father who is in heaven" that moment, meets us—He asks to be both addressed and loved. Further, in distress, God solaces "as one whom his mother comforts,"—nay, a mother may forget her child, but God will not forget His children. And still more, when the departing Saviour said, "In my Father's house are many mansions," or informed us that he was going to "His God and our God, to His Father and our Father," his words all bring vividly before us the family relation. He so absolutely interweaves the name of God with everything connected with Home, that ere that name can be detached or forgotten, the whole family constitution must be violated or destroyed.

But on the supposition that religion should be taught in our homes, what form of it should prevail?

We reply emphatically, its love, its mercy, its pity and compassion, its unbounded joys, its smiles for *everything but sin*. It is one proof among many that the Scriptures are from God, to see them so full of blessedness for man amid all his mad preference for woe. We are there called to

rejoice, nay, to rejoice alway, and it is in that light that religion should evermore be presented to the young. It does restrain; it does bridle and bound; it does say, "our God is a consuming fire." But that is the high wall reared between the family and sin; and the young should be prevented from ever approaching it by sights and sounds of holy happiness. It is thus that the soul of a child should be drawn towards God, while it is knit to its earthly parent, for thus the foundation of that tower is laid whose summit is indeed to reach to heaven. This is true religion—the happy religion of the Bible—and when this is taught in our homes, the family constitution is advancing that design which God appointed it to promote.

At the same time, that tower is as sure to fall as did that of Babel, unless it be founded on the truth of God. It is to the God of the Bible, and not the fancy-God of nature and of poetry, that children should be guided—the Father who is in heaven—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the very God of peace; and where parents speak only of some great Being whom they call the Deity, or Providence, or the Creator, they are deceiving their little ones with names, as valueless to them as the Great Spirit of the Red Indian tribes. We repeat—it is the God of the Bible, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who makes our homes and our hearts happy of a truth.

And this seems to be the proper place to advert to the subject of family worship—the great feeder of family religion. Our first remark regarding it is, that that family is not a Christian family where God is not worshipped; or where parents do not "show to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and his strength, and

the wonderful works which he hath done." There may be Christians among its members, but as a household God is not honoured—men forget to call upon his name. There may be difficulties and impediments. There may be shamefacedness, or the fear of man, but should he be feared more than sin? Want of gifts may be pled; but it is not gifts, it is grace that is required. Or want of time may be the plea; but think of the great white throne, and say will that pretext there stand the scrutiny of the Judge's eye? Nay, all such gourds wither away at the touch of truth, and everything should yield before a solemn sense of duty; everything *does* give way when men feel the call that is upon them to honour God in all the relations of life. In many cases, it has been one of the first proofs of a saving change, to see a family altar erected—the family gathered around it, and taught to look up for the blessing of a Father who is in heaven. Such decided men have seen at length the sinfulness of all pretexts and all excuses for neglecting the duty. As men, as sinners, as believers, they feel that they must resort again, and again, and again to God; and if deprived of that privilege, their very spirits would cleave to the dust.

Now, when God is thus worshipped in spirit and in truth, that duty becomes the helm of life, the balance-wheel in the moral machinery of home. It warns the father to walk consistently—to *live* his prayers, as well as to offer them. It represses the tendencies of youth to err; and when invested with its true character—one of cheerfulness and joy—the hallowing effects of family worship cannot be told. It is a perpetual protest against sin, a perpetual appeal to God, or a perpetual reposing upon his arm; and though all that may be so abused as to harden or to sear, it may also be the

means of guiding and hallowing the soul. It tells, through the reading of the Word, what God thinks and says ; through his praise, how elevating his service may be ; and through prayer, how needy we are—how ready He is to supply all our wants, or to render the sorrowful happy.

But to the believer no explanation of this privilege is needed, as nothing can render it anything but a task to others who live from early youth till hoary age in a state of soul which unfits them for the duty, and keeps them unacquainted with its blessedness. It tells of pardon for guilt, and strength amid weakness—of light amid darkness, and joy amid sorrow. It habitually puts God upon the throne as the God alike of parent and child, of master and servant. In the morning the Guardian of the night is thanked, and His guidance for the day implored. At night His goodness and His mercies are recognised, and His watchfulness again invoked. The parent goes himself, and takes his children with him, to the great Hearer of prayer, who can make our homes a little heaven and our hearts a little temple. The hallowing and soothing effects of all this are familiar to those who know the secret of the Lord ; and that heart must be dead indeed to God which can continue both in sin and in family prayer without misgivings and haunting alarms.

Yet we do not forget that this sacred privilege has dangers connected with it. We nowhere read that Sir Walter Scott worshipped God in his own home, but he sometimes resorted with his crowding guests, to a spot near the abode of one of his cottagers about the hour of evening prayer. He liked, he said, to be "within earshot of David's Psalms," and pity that he did not sing them ! There was poetry, however, or

something which Scott reckoned antique, in the practice, and he admired what he did not imitate. The poet Burns was of the same spirit, and sang of family worship in some of his most exquisite strains. He had seen it; as a poet he had enjoyed it; and though he lived to trample upon that home-religion which his father's life exemplified, that did not prevent him from drawing a perfect word-picture of the practice. Need we quote it?

"Then kneeling down to heaven's eternal King,  
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:  
Hope springs triumphant on exulting wing  
That thus they all shall meet in future days,  
There ever bask in uncreated rays,  
No more to sigh, nor shed the bitter tear,  
Together hymning their Creator's praise  
In such society yet still more dear,  
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere."

Now, all that can be done regarding family worship, and no salutary impression received from it. To the believer, however, it is a hallowing joy; and as the house of Obed-edom was blessed while the ark was there, our homes are happy while God is worshipped in them.

It is true, this practice is now largely neglected in our land. Many who are now parents, and who were reared beside a family altar, have forgotten to erect one in their own home, and none more intensely worldly than they—they rob their children of an inheritance which should have been sacredly transmitted. But, amid the neglect of multitudes, the privilege still continues to many, like a well in the desert. So sweet was such commerce with God to David, that seven times in a day he offered the praise which was due. At morning, at noon, and at night, he sought his God in prayer; and that



father who would see his family blessed, or be clear of their blood, should surely train them to do likewise towards Him who makes the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice over us. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High ; to shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night." \* With such a morning and evening sacrifice offered from the heart, our families may dwell in safety under the shadow of Omnipotence—the earthly hymn is a prelude to the Hosannas of heaven.

There is another subject to which the desires and the efforts of Christian parents should be much turned : upon it the progress of religion in their children vitally depends.—That subject is—confidential communication with parents on the state of the soul. It is well known, and somewhat difficult of explanation, that the nearest relations are often the most averse to this kind of intercourse ; but Christian parents should cultivate it with care. The Rev. Legh Richmond longed for such intercourse with his children, till his longings became pain. By letters, and many fond endearments, he sought to lure them into the habit ; and when he did not succeed, he wrote—"Oh ! what would I give for one *voluntary* conversation or letter detailing the past and present history of his mind." He added—"Many a secret tear does his silence cost me." His attempts, in some instances, entirely failed, till death came so near as to melt all other influences ; and when the spell of silence broke, he exulted with joy unspeakable.

Now, all this indicates that the parent who would "help the joy" of his offspring should seek to train them to a frank and

\* Psalm xcii. 1, 2.

cordial intercourse on such subjects. Modesty is becoming in youth ; petulant talking is to be repressed ; but speech seasoned with salt should be cultivated and cherished.

Nor should we forget that the remembrance of a parent's prayers and painstaking has formed the last remnant of good in the souls of some prodigal sons ; it has even been blessed to reclaim them from the paths of the destroyer ; while tens of thousands, we doubt not, will trace up their love of the holy and the pure to that abounding fountain. An English visitor to America was present at a family worship there. He was an infidel : but so vividly did the remembrance of a godly father's supplications then flash upon his mind, that he could continue an infidel no longer, and a father's habitual prayers for his household have thus gone to the hearts of the Godless. Such honouring of God is doubly, trebly blessed ; and the man who neglects it forsakes his own mercy.\*

And have prayerless parents ever considered how deeply they endanger the souls of their children by their neglect ? Have they thought of the "fury" that is to be the portion of those families who call not on the name of the Lord ? Have they reflected how family afflictions are unimproved, how family blessings are not recognised, how hearts are hardened, by the neglect of the Great Giver ? and how children, amid all these sources of sin, are not trained,

"Whate'er betide,  
To tread with happy steps the path of duty ?"

We have seen a family altar set up for a season, when death had entered the dwelling, and, while weeping and lacerated in their hearts, the inmates have seemed to pray. But the wound was healed ; the garments of sorrow were soon put

\* See Abbot's "Mother at Home," chap. vii.

aside ; the lately erected altar was laid in ruins ; and the hopes which had been cherished for those stricken mourners lay in ruin beside it. Now, is it not one of the saddest of all sorrows to see souls thus perishing under the very rod, and hugging misery when the Hearer of prayer would conduct them to glory ? Such parents, surely, do not know the value of souls as their price is proclaimed on the Cross.

Once more, in regard to family religion, we observe that good should be expected from the right discharge of parental duty. It is often done merely as a duty ; but, as it is not cheered or animated by hope, it is cold, effectless, and dishonouring to the Spirit of God. We ought, then, to look up and expect an answer when we cry. We should believe that what is done in faith will end in blessings, and that our children and our homes will know the goodness of God our Saviour. Without that hope cherished in some degree, we may still pray, but it is not the prayer of faith, so much as of formality or despair. We may still use means, but they are employed without earnestness, and followed by no blessing, while quietly to wait for the salvation of our God is both honouring to Him, and fraught with joy to parents.

## EXAMPLES.

We need not try to find a better illustration, both of the spirit and the method of family prayer, than is supplied by the case of the Rev. Richard Cecil.\* He says, "Tedi-ousness in family religion will weary children and servants. Fine language will shoot above them. . . . . Gloominess

\* It is not our purpose to give detailed directions for the discharge of this duty. Our little Hand-book for families would thereby become too large. Matthew Henry was wont to say—"They do well who read the Word at family worship. They do better who read and pray. They do best who read and praise and pray."

or austerity of devotion will make them dread religion as a hard service. Let them be met with smiles."

He adds—"I make no formal comment on the Scripture read; but when any striking event or sentiment arises, I say, 'Mark that.' 'See how God judges of things.' Sometimes I ask what they think, and how such a thing strikes them."

"I endeavour," he proceeds, "to raise the children and servants to a persuasion that God's will in Scripture is the standard, and that this standard is perpetually in opposition to the corrupt one around and before them."

"I read the Scriptures to my family in some regular order. . . . . I look on the chapter of the day as a lesson sent for that day; and so I regard it as coming from God for present use, and not of my own seeking."

" . . . . Regularity must be enforced. If a certain hour is not fixed, and adhered to, the family will inevitably be found in confusion."

"Religion should be prudently brought before a family. The old Dissenters wearied their families. . . . Something gentle, quiet, moderate, should be our aim. There should be no scolding: it should be mild and pleasant."

"I avoid absolute uniformity: the mind revolts at it."

"Nothing of superstition should attach to family duty. It is not absolutely and in all cases indispensable. If unavoidably interrupted, we omit it; it is well. . . . . I do not, however, mean in any degree to relax the proper obligation."

Now, these are the maxims of a holy prudence regarding a precious privilege, and were any supplement required, it might be found in the sayings of Matthew Henry's sagacity

on the subject. "If you have not a Church in your house, it is to be feared Satan will have a seat there." "If we make our houses God's houses, we shall be hid in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide us." "The way to keep sin out of the house is to keep up religion in the house, which will be the most effectual antidote to Satan's poison." "If there were a Church in every house, there would be such a Church in our land as would make it a blessing throughout the whole earth." "I beseech you, make a business of your family religion, and not a by-business." "While you seem saints in your devotions, prove not yourselves sinners in your conversation." "Your family worship is an honour to you; see to it that neither you nor yours be in anything a disgrace to it." "If you have confidence enough to rule a family, I hope you have confidence enough to pray with a family." "Wherever we go ourselves, we must take our religion with us." \*

But enough: the obligation to this duty is plain, even though no commandment can be quoted expressly and by name enjoining its performance. The reasons for it are cogent: its blessings are manifold, while the excuses for neglecting it are fallacies which may all be resolved into the absence of the love of God, or of fellowship with Him in Christ. Let the soul of a father once feel what it is to be sinful, and to be surrounded with sinful, though much-loved, little ones, then all obstructions will disappear. The family altar will be set up, and kept up. Like Job, a daily sacrifice will be offered there for each child in the Home. Affection from child to parent will be deepened by the love cherished for a heavenly

\* See Sermon on "Family Religion," by Rev. M. Henry.

Father ; and when the saint, the husband, and the father is summoned away, he may quietly leave his little ones under the guardianship of the orphan's God ; for "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

## CHAPTER II.

## THE EDUCATION OF HOME.

Object of this Chapter—All Nature a School—Early Lessons—Importance of Home Education—Variety of Mental Constitution—The Body to be cared for—Infant Schools—The Affections—Conscience—Symmetrical Training—The Christian Graces—The Triumphs of Home—All Beautiful Things should be Taught—The Bible—Training for God is Training for Ourselves—Emulation—The Education of Shew—The Study of Words—Examples—Philip Henry—Edward Bickersteth—Lady Blessington.

It is no part of our purpose to discuss the comparative merits of education at Home and at a public seminary. Though much might be said as to the necessity for Christianising nearly all our public institutions, that is a question so wide and so complex as to demand and deserve a separate treatise. Neither is it designed to offer a complete account even of a Home education, but merely to supply some hints to the earnest parent who loves the soul of his child, or who would so train his little one that God may be honoured, and Home made happy. The most momentous trust that can be placed in man's hand is certainly the care of souls, yet how limited is the preparation of many for that solemn work! Fitness for it is often left to be acquired at random, and injuries which can never be counteracted may hence be produced. To prevent such results, some of the prominent points to be kept in view, in all godly training, are now to be mentioned.

And, first, all nature is a school for the young: they some-

times appear to be learning at every pore. Sights and sounds, friends and strangers, earth and sky, night and day, everything, in short, seem to pour ideas into the mind of healthy childhood. It literally

"Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

The "students at the fireside seminary," or "the graduates of the hearth," as children have been called, are stored with knowledge before some suppose that they have begun to learn. The young disciple often outruns the tardy teacher, and has learned a crowd of lessons ere ever we supposed him even capable of instruction. Philosophy is thus taught in sport: crumbs are picked up from the table of science, and at least a foundation is laid in infancy on which the future fabric of wisdom and knowledge may rest. A father's or a mother's love, the intercourse of child with child, and all that happens within the circle of home, enlarges the little cyclopædia. A master may instruct—he may cultivate and teach, but parents can educate all the powers and capabilities of a child; and while this clearly indicates the true nature of education, it also shews that parents possess a power over mind, such as God has entrusted to no other hands.

Hence the importance which attaches to education at Home, as supplying the great want of young hearts. He who made us what we are, appointed our parents to the solemn trust of training us. As face answers to face in a glass, does the influence of parenthood correspond to the requirements of the young; for whatever may be thought of scholastic teaching, there are portions of our powers which none but God's representative can develop. Some



parts of our training may be delegated with success, nay, with noble results; but it should be repeated, and repeated yet again, that there are principles of action and important powers in childhood which parental love alone can warm into life or nurse into vigour. Intellect, soul, heart, all demand some finer touch than that of mere professional skill to render them all they should be made.

Nor is this mysterious. A master may *teach*, but only parents, or those similarly placed, can properly *train*. The example deepening the precept—the love enforcing the lesson—the kindly interest and sympathy, cheering, invigorating, soothing, are found in perfection only in a home where Christian principle presides, and that training must be at once the basis and the completion of all other systems.

But next; what is the order which nature and wisdom assign to such training?

1. Though the family circle may be small, the dispositions may be just as various as the names of the young. Some are impulsive, and others timid: some are selfish, sullen, or cunning; others frank and genial: in a word, in a single household as many diversities may appear as there are individuals there, yet so exquisite is the moral machinery that an intelligent parent may direct it so as to meet all these varieties. A miniature of the great world is there; its similarities and contrasts, its sympathies and antipathies, all demand our guidance; and a wise parent will begin his work by controlling the whole in harmony with the mind of God.

But, 2. In proceeding with this work of education in its widest sense, the body of the young demands a large portion of our care. Upon its soundness much of the happiness of all the future hangs; and when we think of the unhappy

effects which follow either neglected or over-stimulated childhood, no parent can be excessive in watching over the welfare of the body during the first years of training. To a large extent, it should then take precedence of the mind—at least, the mind should be educated rather by the visible or the tangible, than by scholastic technicalities. Indeed, it were a wise rule to let a child “wander at his own sweet will” during his early years. The chief care that he needs is to keep him from sin and danger. He should sometimes be repressed rather than stimulated in learning; and as the nervous system is then easily injured, all that tends to overstrain it should be shunned, if parents would not incur the risk of lifelong detriment to their little one. “The mental force should then be husbanded much rather than used,” is the wise counsel of a friend of the young.\*

And all this is just saying that there should be no forcing—no use of the hot-bed or hot-house in early years. The time has not long gone by since a system from which great things were expected, professed to impart to infancy an amount of knowledge which is commonly supposed to be peculiar to the advanced. Lispering infants were to be transmuted into prodigies of learning, alike deep in the mysteries of chemistry and astronomy; but that system has now found its proper level. Those whom it trained have not *continued* prodigies, and infant-school teaching, though wisely retained, is now mainly adapted to the bodies rather than the minds of the young.

Yet, 3. We would not be understood as pleading for any deferred training of the affections. A child begins to love as soon as it can mark its mother's eye. Basking in the sunshine of her smile, the little one may well be encouraged to

\* Taylor's “Home Education,” chap. i.

smile with a responsive affection. That is the heaven of infancy, and its blessedness may be so full as to prove a defence against temptation, or an anchor amid storms in all coming years. If every fond endearment be tried to teach a little one to walk, or to draw forth its first articulate utterance, should less be done to teach that little one to *love*? The woodpecker, it has been said, is a carpenter; the beaver is both that and a mason; the bittern is a fisherman; and the hawk a sportsman—all by the force of instinct. Now, love is the power which should guide a child's soul, as these instincts guide the lower creatures.

Neither, 4. Should any counsel be listened to that would suggest the tardy development of conscience: it early develops itself. Its power is indicated by the little criminal's blush when detected, his faltering lip when he would equivocate, his weeping outbreak when he feels that he has done wrong and is wicked. Parents, then, should educate conscience—should keep it quick, and sensitive, and tender. While they pray that it may be cleansed in the appointed way, it should be their endeavour to accustom childhood to “exercise itself to have always a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward man.” It is not cleverness but goodness that should be their primary aim. The more that conscience is trained, the more vigorous it becomes in upholding what is good; and a Christian parent's purest joy is to see this governing faculty of the soul invigorated from year to year, by a law the same in principle as that which strengthens the limbs by judicious exercise. The first theft profoundly agitates the youthful pilferer. It is then especially that

“Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind—  
The thief doth fear each bush an officer;”

but the next transgression and the next grow less troublesome, till crimes which endanger liberty are committed without compunction. The first oath, it has been said, almost palsies a stripling's tongue, but if conscience be not obeyed, it may become silent. Wild blasphemy may then grow familiar, and by all these things, parents should be taught to train and discipline the conscience.\*

Nor is it difficult to discover how. Ingenious and watchful parents will find many ways of promoting that end. A warning, a text, a look like that which Jesus gave to Peter, may help to hedge up the way of youth. And even though conscience may seem callous for a time, it will sooner or later make its power to be felt; it will testify for God, or foretell what awaits the guilty soul at last; and when a parent's exertions have thus been blessed to stimulate conscience, or keep it on its throne, he becomes to his children what exaggération has called him—"Fortune, fate, and destiny."

5. Parents should aim at symmetrical training—that is, they should train their children's powers in their due proportion, and each in its proper place. There are diseases which occasion undue magnitude in the parts of the body which they affect, and a similar result may be produced in the mind. But the head is not to be pitted against the heart. The love and the interests which cluster round Home are

\* Many have been careful to record how much this is neglected. "One page of the daily manual teaches the power of commas; another the spelling of words; another the rules of cadence and emphasis; but the pages are missing which teach the laws of forbearance under injury, of sympathy with misfortune, of impartiality in our judgments of men, of love and fidelity to truth, of the ever-during relations of men in the domestic circle, in organised government, and of stranger to stranger. How can it be expected that such cultivation would scatter seeds, so that, in the language of Scripture, 'instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree.'"—See Godrich's 'Sow Well and Reap Well,' p. 148.

not to overlay the kindliness which is due to others. While all right principle is inwrought, and no wicked thing endured, all endeavours should be used to mature a well-balanced character. To accomplish this, and for that end to watch the tendencies of each child, to stimulate or to restrain, to originate or to direct, will both try a parent's patience and task his utmost skill. They may even prompt the question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" but, on the other hand, it both strengthens our hands and soothes our anxieties to know that "our sufficiency is of God."

6. If parents be Christians, all the Christian graces will be trained in their offspring. As Home is, next to heaven, the domain of love, that grace should be ascendant. Meekness to bear with,—patience when trial comes,—justice to guard the rights of others, and mercy to sympathise with their sorrows,—truth to produce confidence,—courage, that no sin may pass unchecked,—humanity, that Christ may be imitated,—all, in short, that can adorn his doctrine, should be taught in our Homes—our first normal school, our nursery for public life. No doubt the watchfulness which all this implies is hard to indolence; it is impossible to everything but Christian love. But let parents be encouraged. What more hard than iron? Yet it can be made to run down like a stream. Or what more enduring than rock? Yet a drop of water may rend it in twain, or the tender fibre of a plant may penetrate its closest chinks. In like manner a father's or a mother's love can penetrate and influence where apparent impossibilities abound. At the worst, fathers and mothers are not answerable for their children's conversion, but only for the use of all scriptural means to promote that result. Be these means

employed in simple faith and hope, and God will bless both parents and children.

But the importance of the Christian graces bids us to be more specific here. There have been men who could conquer the world in arms, but fell a prey to themselves,—and self-government should therefore be strenuously taught.

“A wretch concentrated all in self”

should never be found in a Christian Home; and whether it be the outbreak of passion or the gloom of sullenness, the young should be trained to strive against it. Falsehood should be resolutely banished as the root of countless sins. No favouritism should intrude there. No doubt, a holy earnestness is needed to give all these things their proper place and prominence. But He who made us what we are has made all this our duty, and when it is attempted in faith, our God will establish the work of our hands upon us. If any parent will act in the spirit of the words used by Pharaoh's daughter regarding Moses, and seek to rear his child for God, the hope may be cherished that such a child will live before the Holy One for ever.

And do not the triumphs of Home, in many cases, beckon parents to make such efforts? All its influences, properly employed, promise blessed results. There is a divinely appointed connexion between “training up a child in the way in which he should go,” and the relative assurance, “when he is old, he will not depart from it.” No doubt there are many sad examples which seem to say the contrary. A gifted man and a profound observer has said—“The most common of all human complaints is parents groaning under the vices of their children. *This* is all the effect of parental

influence"—but it is parental influence perverted : it is passion ruling in place of reason, or mere authority instead of love. Only let the training be as the Word of God directs, and the result will be as that Word has promised. There is an appointed connexion, we repeat, between means and ends. Use the means, expect the end ; and then, though God be sovereign, it will be seen that wise and godly training has led to wise and godly children. What has supplied the millions who are the salt of the earth all round the globe ? Whence come the minds which are influential for godliness, or great by reason of goodness ? Is it not from the homes of godly parents ? Now, all this sufficiently attests the fact, that when man is faithful to what God appoints, God is faithful to what He has promised. Let a father, then, be what he should be—a Christian teacher, a Christian ruler, a Christian friend to his children,—weeping when they weep, rejoicing in their joy, and they will grow up to call him blessed. " I detect myself to this day," says Cecil, " in laying down maxims in my family, which I took up at three or four years of age—before I could possibly know the reason of them"—and that is only one example out of millions of what parents can accomplish.

Farther, we know how wary men are when they carry explosive materials, or dwell beside them : how wary, then, ought parents to be when they wield such concentrated moral influences ? We think of all the gentle powers of Nature—the sunshine, the rain, and the dew ; or of its more stringent forces, like frost or tempests ; and we see them all reproduced, in a moral sense, amid the amenities or by the authority of Home. Duty is engrafted upon love, and as God taught Ephraim of old to go, so parents now, by God's blessing,

may teach their children whatever is lovely and of good report. On the other hand, if we do not expect success in such things, is it likely to be granted? Is it by despondency that we honour the Spirit of God?

7. All beautiful things should be taught to children. Flowers should attract them. Little birds should teach them—"the stork, the crane, and the swallow." Like the bee, they should visit all that is lovely. Above all, the beauty of a Saviour's love—his special love to children, should be much upon their mind. And if a parent be wise unto salvation, all around him will be crowded with symbols of spiritual things—which will tell him of God in his goodness, his wisdom, or his power. The thunder which scares, the sunshine which gladdens, the little flower and the mighty oak, the dewdrop and the heaving sea, will all be types to such a parent's eye, but they would be empty and unmeaning still, unless they guided him, and through him his little ones, to the Altogether Lovely. The end of all education, which deserves the name, is the restoration of God's image to the soul. That is done by leading us to "the Brightness of the Father's glory;" and when that result is aimed at, God will honour parents of a truth.

And how encouraging, farther, to know that the most august transaction which our world ever witnessed—Redemption, with all its wonders—is level to a child's capacity, because it is best understood by love! He is the wisest parent who keeps that always before his mind, and most skilfully commends it to his Home. Surely if it be true—and it is—that, in the lips of many, education means only some lessons in secular things, it is high time that believing parents should roll away that dishonour from the Saviour,



and make Him the Alpha and the Omega, the soul and the substance, of their efforts.

8. And in all this, let the Word of God be ever the Christian parent's text-book. Of all books for children, the Bible is the best and the richest. Its endless variety—its graphic sketches—its brevity and beauty—its tenderness—its unwavering truthfulness—its ceaseless reference to God and eternity—its simplicity—its pathos, and other peculiarities, will attract and allure a family group with unfading freshness—if the parental instructor be wise. All the sources of wisdom and knowledge are open there ; all the graces are fully developed ; all the counterfeits detected ; and that parent may suspect his own tact who does not find in the Bible enough for training his children from Sabbath to Sabbath. Would we inculcate practical wisdom ? Take the Proverbs. Would we learn to love ? Study Jesus. Would we be bold for him ? Imitate Paul—and so of a thousand cases. The Bible is the great elevator of our race ; the great censor of moral evils ; the great antidote to false opinions. It is the vital principle and the preserving salt of society ;—whatever parents teach, then, let them teach the Bible. To displace or depreciate it is to dishonour God.

And we should not fail to notice that parents are farther encouraged by the beautiful moral law, that just in proportion as we train for God, according to His Word, we train for ourselves. While the neglect of scriptural training is sure to let tendencies become passions, such as may trample on our most tender feelings, the parent who makes the Word of God the rule of his Home is doing all that can be done to attach his children to him by a manifold tie. It is an unfailing maxim—Work God's work, and that includes

your own : neglect His, and yours is sure to suffer. Whatever is thus guided by the will of God, and directed to His glory, must be both ennobling and peace-speaking to man ; and it is a mournful proof that his mind is biassed or blinded by sin, when any other maxim can for a moment find a lodgment in his bosom.

9. Allusion may also be made to the principle of emulation. Some would banish it entirely from education, while others employ it to the uttermost, till competition between the young becomes as keen as it is upon the race-course. But truth lies in the middle. There is a right principle in man which prompts him to pursue excellence : there is a wrong which prompts him to envy it. Now, the one of these should be fostered, the other should be repressed ; and if there be tact and kindness among the trainers of Home, the evil tendency may there be nipt. And when the Scriptures place "emulations" among "the works of the flesh,"\* they warn us to nip it, if we seek the well-being of the young. They must be taught rather to surpass themselves than their fellows : to compete in goodness, in humility, in kindness, rather than for precedence or power. Rewards should be given not so much for mental cleverness as for moral actions, and the perils which accompany stimulated competition will thus be diminished or disappear.

10. And, in connexion with this, all care should be taken to avoid what might be called the vice of cramming the minds of children. "The education of show" is so much more common than training in what is good and true, that it demands some earnest antidote. If effect be aimed at, rather than efficiency—if it be the ambition of parents to see their

\* Gal. v. 20.

little prodigy stand the first in perhaps ten different studies, then their course is plain. Let them proceed as many are doing—and such prodigies will become more and more obviously the living advertisements of their schools. Yet how unwisely! The process of education has been likened to an attempt to fill a narrow-necked vessel. Dash water upon it, and drops enter—introduce but a limited stream, and the vessel is speedily full; and we need not tarry to apply the illustration to the present subject.

While avoiding all details of training or education, there is one particular which should not be utterly omitted. For centuries past it has been a common practice to make the study of words an essential part of all education, except about the very lowest. Whatever be the sphere for which a boy is designed—in the army or the navy, in the pulpit, or at the bar, in the chair, or at the desk—usage demands that he shall spend years not a few in that study. The practice has been carried so far as to prove an irksome bondage to some—it has terminated often in life-long disgust. But a change is passing over that usage. Nature and the destination of our sons in life are more consulted now, and both the young and their friends may rejoice in the change. Men now understand that it is not enough merely to develop mind: it should be developed in harmony with the place which the young are to occupy in life, and it seems nearly as unwise to insist that all shall be disciplined in one way as that all should be of one business or of one stature.

It must be said, however, that as a discipline for mind, the study of languages is scarcely to be surpassed by any other. The instructive and not seldom amusing transitions which it exhibits, the history of a country conveyed in its language,

and similar things, all indicate how important or attractive such a study could be made ; and if we were thus trained aright, it would be more commonly true than it is that we use language, instead of language using us. But some examples may best illustrate this subject.

*Tribulation*, then, is a word at once and easily understood, but how full of significance does it become when we learn that it is derived from *tribulum*, an instrument for thrashing corn, or separating the wheat from the straw! *Heathen* is a familiar word, but its meaning becomes instructive when we know that as the people of old who lived on heaths, or in wild districts, were the last to be Christianised, the name which described them is now applied to non-Christians. The word *kind* is *kinned*, and mankind means *man-all-related*. In the same spirit *kindness* tells of the feeling which should prevail among kindred. *Conscience* has even a deeper meaning than is commonly supposed, and implies knowledge held in common with another—in this case *with God*. *Sacrament*, again, is both curious and instructive in its history. Through various changes it came to signify the oath taken by a Roman soldier to follow his captain, and was ~~thence~~ transferred into the Christian Church to mean the believer's consecration, or his oath to Christ. These and other examples shew how much history, morality, or religion ~~may~~ be conveyed by a single word ; and were the study of language wisely and skilfully employed for conveying such knowledge, that study might be redeemed from much dullness and many a witticism—there would be less force in the question whether youth requires

„No nourishment to feed the growing mind,  
But conjugated verbs and nouns declined ?”

It may be an exaggeration, but it is based upon truth, to remark that more knowledge may be conveyed by the history of a word than by that of a campaign.\*

After all, however, it is to things yet more than words that the attention of the young should be mainly turned. It is true that every word learned by a boy is a new power, or a new means to many ends; but the practical spirit of our age demands practical studies; and there can be little doubt that the signs of our times in this respect point to engineering, to chemistry, and other pursuits, rather than to languages which all reckon dead, and many hold to be deadening.

And such are some discursive hints on education—a subject so important as to be solemn. No attempt has been made to furnish detailed directions; we only offer suggestions, which Christian parents may consult while seeking the welfare of the young, and the happiness of Home. Here above most of the duties devolved upon parents, momentous issues are at stake. The destinies of the young for all time, mayhap for eternity, are involved. Mind is to be trained. Conscience is to be quickened, and kept quick. The affections are to be elevated, purified, and deepened, all according to the truth of God; and that parent who does not feel the responsibility of these things is not qualified to train. When the limb of a little child is fractured or dislocated, we need not tell what appliance after appliance is employed to put it right. Affection meanwhile longs for the day when strength shall be restored; and shall less ingenuity be put forth, or less earnestness displayed, in seeking to adjust what is wrong in a soul?

\* See Trench "On the Study of Words," where we have found our examples.

## EXAMPLES.

Philip Henry, to whom reference has been already made, was one of the most remarkable men of a remarkable age. He fell on evil times, when earnest religion was persecuted, and as far as possible put down. He was restrained from his much-loved work of preaching by tyrannical laws ; but while the memory of those tyrants who oppressed him has now sunk to the level which sooner or later awaits the name of the oppressor, Philip Henry is enrolled among those who will be held in everlasting remembrance. Now, his method of educating his children was not the least remarkable peculiarity of his home.

1. Immediately after his family prayers at night, Philip Henry's children waited on their bended knees for a special prayer on their behalf, for the blessing of God on high, and that blessing was always implored with great solemnity by their father.

2. Each Thursday evening, instead of reading the Scriptures, he catechised his children and servants.

3. On Saturday evening they gave an account of what they remembered of the religious readings and exercises of the week. This Philip Henry called "gathering up the fragments ;" and these fragments, under his management, often furnished a rich repast.

4. The Lord's day was his great sowing season in the minds of his household. He deemed it a remnant of one paradise pointing forward to another, and took for his guide that clause in the fourth commandment, which says, "Thou, thy son, and thy daughter . . . . it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings." Remembering that in the Temple the daily sacrifice was doubled on the Sabbath, he

tried spiritually to do the same, and all his household arrangements for the Lord's day were made subservient to that end. It was, at the same time, his endeavour to make all that concerned religion joyous or attractive, and his Sabbaths were thus made refreshing at once to Philip Henry's home and his own soul.

5. That his children might see religion in its proper place, Henry frequently observed fasts in his family, or had stated days for special humiliation and prayer. "Thus was he," in the reverent language of his son and biographer, "prophet and priest in his own house, and the king there also, ruling in the fear of God, and not suffering sin upon any under his roof."

6. Henry had some general maxims from Scripture which he early sought to fix in the minds of his children, like nails in a sure place. "Remember thy Creator," "Come to Jesus," "Bear the yoke in thy youth," "Flee youthful lusts," "Cleanse thy way,"—these, and other brief maxims, were household words with him, and were early inwoven with the thoughts and the habits of his children; so that it would have been an outrage to their own hearts, as well as to their father's lessons, to forget them in life.

But, 7. Along with these, the more ordinary kinds of scholarship were not neglected by Philip Henry in training his children. Among other things, he taught his eldest daughter Hebrew, when she was only six or seven years of age, by means of an English and Hebrew grammar which he had compiled for that purpose, and the pupil was carried so far forward by such fatherly assiduities that she could translate a Hebrew psalm with ease.\*

\* . . . . "Every day of the week his custom was, every morning and night, to

Another admirable exemplification of Home methods of education, or of the spirit which should pervade them, may be found in the life and the painstaking of Edward Bickersteth. In training for spiritual prosperity, his maxims, as recorded by himself, were these:—Pray for the children: ever instil Christian maxims: act towards them in the spirit of the gospel: watch over their intercourse with others: teach them to govern their tempers: see that they diligently attend to the means of grace. . . . In every point shew them Christ—he is the root of all spiritual prosperity, the physician of body and soul, and the giver of mental power. He is altogether lovely in all his ways, and everything should turn the mind to him. In every walk, in every lesson, in every event, in every sin, in every mercy, Bickersteth thus tried to speak to his children concerning a Saviour. He was the sun and the glory of every day; and children so trained have learned to call their father blessed. Bodily health was not neglected, neither was the culture of the mind, nor accomplishments, so far as they were Christian; but this man of God ever put that wisdom first which came from heaven to guide us thither, and, amid ten thousand proofs of the ravages of sin, it is one of the most conclusive, that parents expect prosperity in any sense for their children, while neglecting to lead them in the good way of the Lord. With the exquisite pathos of a mother whose

read a chapter to his family, and expound it distinctly and clearly, and, after singing a psalm and prayers, to appoint his children to retire by themselves, and write over a copy of his exposition; by which means, as himself once told me, every one of his children, five in number, had the exposition of the whole Bible by them, written with their own hands. This custom he kept up constantly in his own house for above twenty, if not above thirty years together, without any intermission, except in cases of absence from home, which happened but seldom.”  
—See *Life of Philip Henry*, by Sir J. B. Williams, *Notes*.



heart had been deeply wounded, poetry may tell of the  
Homes of England—

“How beautiful they stand,  
Amidst their tall, ancestral trees,  
O'er all the pleasant land ;”

but unless the fear of God be reigning there, even such homes are morally bleak, and desolate, and hastening to decay.

Such, then, are specimens of the painstaking employed by Christian principle to educate children for God. And no need to depict at length the contrast between all this and the superficial character of much that is called education. Read, for example, the life of any of the world's devotees : let it be that of Lady Blessington, and the contrast there will strike any reflective mind as much as the contrast between a fleeting mirage and a solid, material landscape. Oh need we wonder that they who are trained amid such ungodliness become the votaries of self, of pleasure, of sin ? Were the Homes of England guided by such principles as those which directed Henry or Bickersteth, then it would become widely true that—

“There first the child's glad spirit loves  
Its country and its God .”

but as it is, where the fear and the love of God do not preside, the nurslings of ungodliness become at last, by a sure decree, the sons and the daughters of woe.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE AUTHORITY OF HOME.

The Fifth Commandment—A Conflict of Duties—Heavenly Wisdom—The Moral Throne—A Constitutional Sovereign—Godless Children of Godly Parents—Explanations—Examples—Colonel Aaron Burr—Napoleon Bonaparte—George Washington—John Albert Bengel—Noah Webster.

"HONOUR thy father and thy mother," are the divine words which decide the Authority of Home, and decide it beyond the reach of sinless challenge for ever. If aught were needed to enforce or illustrate such a precept, we find it in the words—"Children, obey your parents in *all* things." Modern theories of education may be advanced ignoring that authority; parents may thus be tempted to relax their control, or to be less circumspect in their supervision; but wherever it is lessened or presented in a light different from God's, God and man are there in conflict, and disorder will ensue. The domestic constitution is outraged, and, as that constitution is divine, it never can be violated without sin, and its close companion, sorrow.

But in referring to parental authority, we speak of Christian Homes, and assume that the will of God is a rule to the parents. We have seen a despotic father drive from his presence, by harsh, unfeeling conduct, the child who would have made God's truth the standard of judgment, and in such a case, there is a painful collision between duty to God and duty to an earthly parent: it is the old question as to

obeying God rather than man. All such cases demand the very meekness of wisdom, lest, under the guise of religion or the plea of conscience, children be only indulging a form of domestic rebellion. But where God's truth is the acknowledged standard, the path of duty is plain: the parent's authority is over all: his will may not be challenged: his word is law. Does he issue an order, for example, regarding the books to be read, the company to be kept, or the path to be pursued by his children? Then to oppose or to evade his will is undisguised sin, and will bring the soul to sorrow—perhaps into peril.

No doubt the parent needs wisdom, and tenderness, and care, ere he issue such an order. A command given in anger will most probably be such as cannot be enforced; and then parental authority suffers. Hence the need of asking wisdom from Him who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not; and hence also the call to fathers and mothers not to provoke their children to wrath. But a parent's abuse of power cannot supersede or even modify the divine enactment; and that enactment is—"Children, obey your parents in all things." Between the extremes of laxity and of strictness, every parent, guided by love, must seek the narrow channel; and if parents seek it where God has laid it down, they will not seek in vain.

But though God has thus placed a parent on a moral throne, it is not the throne of an autocrat. Nay, a father is a constitutional king, and a mother a constitutional queen. Each has a book of laws, binding alike on sovereign and subject; and when they are obeyed, families know indeed what it is to live under the Prince of peace; the olive branch may wave continually beside that hearth.

True: a parent's authority may be resisted by wayward youth. Command and entreaty may be alike despised, and some may plunge into sin, as if in retaliation or revenge for the holiness of their father's home. This has been done in a thousand cases, and confessed with contrition in a few. In explaining the anomaly thus presented "of Christian parents with unchristian children," one has spoken of some whose "tastes, pursuits, and habits seem to run counter to those of their early home, and over whom the silent tear of parental grief is often shed." "Surely there is cause for weeping," it is added, "when the fond heart which has watched with solicitude over the helpless years of infancy, studying by a thousand self-sacrifices to promote the comfort and happiness of the little one, lives to see that cherished child grow up to maturity, alienated from home in opinion and feeling, preferring any society to that of the being who has fostered it, and seeking amusements diametrically opposed to the principles taught beneath the parent's roof! Is it not a startling fact, that many whose names stand high in the Church of Christ are so situated?—that even those bearing the high and holy office of the ministry, whose preaching has been the honoured instrument of conversion to many, and whose writings have refreshed and delighted thousands, should be called to bear the heavy sorrow of domestic disunion—the felt want of sympathy in mind with the dear ones of their own family circles? Why are these things so? . . . . ."

Now, all this is true; all this is deplorable; but, without undervaluing the inconsistencies of many a godly parent—nay, giving to these their full scope and influence for evil—it is still the native unholiness of the unrenewed heart that

\* See a judicious tract, "Hints to Christian Parents on Little Inconsistencies."

originates the whole of what has been described so well. It is not more certain that a criminal will hasten from his cell, if the door be left open, than that unholy youths will hasten to sin as soon as they can or dare. The love of that, is stronger in their natures than the love of their parents. Aversion to all that is holy makes them feel as if they were fettered when they may not walk as the world does ; and a parent's authority in such a case, even though it be backed by a parent's tears, is treated as Samson, while unshorn, snapt the withes which bound him.

Still, however, it is a parent's authority, according to the Word of God, which forms the basis of Home rule, and no penal colony—no pillory—not even the gibbet, can serve as a substitute for the divine arrangement. But be that authority wielded in a right spirit, for right ends. Let example enforce authority, in the spirit of heavenly truth, and then may the hope be cherished that the Father of all the families of man will honour his own ordinance, and bless it as the means of training up a race to serve him when the fathers are no more.

There is an excess, however, against which we must guard. *It is possible to overgovern.* Children have a title to happiness and to freedom, according to the Word of God ; that is a holy happiness and a holy freedom, and whatever interferes with that is an excess—it will occasion a reaction ; it will crush the young, instead of only controlling them. This is not designed, of course, to limit a true and scriptural authority ; for to limit that were just to attempt to be wiser than God. But care should be taken, lest authority become either the interference of a busybody or the overbearing of a despot. Sin must be put down.

No wicked thing *can* be endured. If endured, it is encouraged ; and if encouraged, parents are guilty ; but, in all such cases, love should hold the sceptre ; and, where love does not preside, the souls of the young may be repelled and imperilled.

## EXAMPLES.

The want of parental authority may be traced in much of the waywardness under which the world is groaning. Many a youth is allowed by blind and unwise affection, or by parental indifference and disregard for the soul and the eternity of the young, to assume the command of Home, instead of yielding all submission there. It is recorded of a dishonoured American, Colonel Aaron Burr, that his early years defied all control, and his future career, in spite of brilliant abilities, was one which has handed down his name to enduring infamy, and this is a case in which rebellion at home ended in public disgrace. In spite of a pious parentage, he plunged into scenes of hideous iniquity, and lived till old age overtook him shunned or pitied by all. An equivocal deathbed repentance scarcely furnishes ground for hope regarding this signal moral ruin.

Again, the youth and boyhood of the first Napoleon were spent in a similar spirit, and some have traced to that source the hecatombs upon hecatombs which his ambition sacrificed, and the wide desolations which he wrought on the earth. On the other hand, it is well known that Washington was passionate and headstrong as a boy. Some who regard him as the admiration of the world are not less assured that had he been left to his own control, the wayward youth would have become something far different from the Washington of

originates the whole of what has been described so well. It is not more certain that a criminal will hasten from his cell if the door be left open, than that unholy youths will hasten to sin as soon as they can or dare. The love of that stronger in their natures than the love of their parents. Aversion to all that is holy makes them feel as if they were fettered when they may not walk as the world does ; and a parent's authority in such a case, even though it be backed by a parent's tears, is treated as Samson, while unshorn, and snares the withes which bound him.

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There is an excess, however, against which we must guard. *It is possible to overgovern.* Children have a title to liberty and to freedom, according to the Word of God. They have a holy happiness and a holy freedom, and whatever is done with that is an excess—it will occasion a reaction which will crush the young, instead of only controlling them. It is not designed, of course, to limit a true authority ; for to limit that were just to limit the wisdom of God. But care should be taken that authority become either the interference of a despot, or the overbearing of a despot.

history, the founder of a mighty empire. But his mother wielded a parent's authority. She subdued him by mingled firmness and affection, and one who deserves to be called "the delight of the human race," in a far higher sense than the Roman who wore that title, arose to be both her earthly glory and his nation's boast. "We know," one has written, "that Washington was rigidly subjected to parental authority in childhood;" and an example so illustrious may serve as a beacon amid much that is unpromising or dark. When Washington's mother said to her son, "George, God has promised to bless the children who honour their parents, and I believe he will bless you for returning at my wish," she uttered a prophecy as significant as any ever pronounced by lips which were not inspired. Blind affection or unreflecting facility of temper in a parent may cast the reins upon the neck of youth. Authority may be exerted only in paroxysms, and in such a case it is not authority but violence that is employed. But let parents "rule well their own households" in the fear of God, and the power which He authorises will be accompanied with his blessing.

We cannot withhold the following example, in addition to those already given. John Albert Bengel was not merely one of the most learned, but also one of the most loving, men of his age. His life was one long act of affectionate interest in all whom he could influence, and few men have ever more happily illustrated the blessedness of "the new law of love," than this Lutheran divine. But though full of affection, he knew as well how to maintain a parent's authority; for as God over all chastens every son whom he receives, Bengel was decided in repressing all evil in his. For example, one of his sons, when at college, wandered into the ways of the



fool, and his father wrote as follows. His own words will best exemplify the authority of Home:—

“FOOLISH SON! . . . . So then, after all, you are not going on well. This will never do. All my former misgivings about you are revived. Do not oblige me to consult about you with our friends, so as to act upon a resolution which no entreaties of yours will alter, and which will be to the following effect—that as we have no comfort in you, we will incur no scandalous disgrace on your account. Be concerned, I beseech you once for all, about duty and propriety, and begin truly to care for your real welfare, instead of going on any longer in such an unpromising way as obliges all your friends to think of nothing for you but warnings and admonitions. Whatever else may give me trouble at present, you are giving me the most. Well, I have fixed a boundary for you in my own mind, and if you pass it, you will have to thank yourself for any change that will be made in your situation and condition. Reflect, then, at once, whether you intend to value most the love of parents, relatives, and friends, or the good opinion of certain wicked fellows; and whether you prefer to be found a useful member of society, or to become a worthless character, an alien from your family, and dependent for the rest of your life upon what strangers may please to think of you and to do for you. God grant you a sound mind and a better disposition! Troubled as I am upon your account, the good conduct of your brothers and sisters still enables me to subscribe myself,

“YOUR CONSOLING FATHER.”

—Here, then, is one man at least, who will not let down the high authority of God at the bidding of weakness, or so con-

nive at guilt and folly as to foster them. Excision was his intended remedy, but the firm exercise of the authority of Home was blessed to render that dire and last alternative unnecessary.\*

On a subject so important, we may venture yet another example, and it occurred in the case of the great American lexicographer, Dr Noah Webster. In the discharge of his domestic duties he was watchful, consistent, and firm; and though an earnest student, he kept the control of his family in his own hands down to the minutest particular. In the government of his children one rule presided, and that was, instantaneous and entire obedience—obedience not after explanations and reasonings, but as a right, or as due by a child to a parent in the nature of things. He tried to make it manifest that it was the happiness of his children that he sought, and then commanded as one having authority. He reckoned it right to enforce obedience as due at once to God and to a father, and while he regretted the improper relaxation of paternal rule, a recoil, he thought, from the over-strictness of puritanic times, Webster was careful to maintain all due control in his own domain. As domestic subordination is needed to prepare men for due subordination in public spheres, he aimed at promoting that end, convinced that obedient children are ever most likely to prove useful and loyal citizens.

This in regard to moral training. But in the culture of the intellect Dr Webster gave larger freedom to his children. His library was always open to them. He inured them to habits of inquiry; he prompted them to study the difficult, and urged them sometimes even to learn what they

\* Memoir of John A. Bengel, p. 462.

could not fully understand, that their minds might be braced to grapple with difficulties and to overcome them. It was, however, upon moral subjects that his procedure was peculiarly scriptural. He ruled well, and was blessed in his deed. His children were happy because they had learned to obey, and his conduct points us to the only thorough cure for not a few of our social ills.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE EXAMPLE OF HOME.

The Mocking Bird—The Power of Imitation—Its Moral Effects in Children—On Parents—Consistency—The Theatre—An Infidel there—His Feelings—Degenerate Children Reared by Unholy Parents—The Power of a Holy Example—Richard Cecil and his Mother.

NEXT to the Authority of Home, as decided by the Great Lawgiver, we may place the influence of its Example—a subject so important as to demand a separate consideration.

Naturalists describe the mocking bird of the New World as one of the wonders of the forest. While it may be vocal with a whole choir of singing birds, the ear can listen only to that of the mocker, and when he is in full song, a bystander might suppose that he hears all other birds in one. In his domesticated state, that bird whistles for the dog, and the dog starts up and hurries away to meet his master. The mocker screams like a hurt chicken, and the hen flutters her drooping wing and bristling feathers, eager to defend her brood. The barking of the dog, the mewing of the cat, the tune taught by his master, the quivering notes of the canary, all are repeated by the mocker ; and so perfect is his power of imitation, that other birds are said to become mute beside their rival, as if their powers were superseded by his.

Now, a similar principle of imitation operates in our homes : it is there that its most concentrated power appears. Affection and duty, precept and promise, with all that can sway

a young immortal, induce or even bind a child to imitate a parent. A silent influence is thus constantly put forth, of which we may be as unconscious as we are of the beating of the heart, but which is not on that account less strong, and the character of a child is commonly just the accumulated result of this parental example. It is not more natural for some young animals to resort to the water, and for others to soar into the air, than for children to receive impressions through this channel. Such effects are daguerreotyped upon them, and form part of their very existence: they go with them to the grave, and pass with them into eternity, either to enhance their joy or deepen their woe for ever. Like the molten metal delivered into the mould, to come forth either an embodied symmetry or a distorted mass, the child thus receives the impress of the parent; for so perfect is the power of Home, that it as really moulds or models us as the potter the clay upon his wheel.

Nor can the heart of youth, with all its proneness to evil, suppress the workings of conscience under parental example. If a parent lives with eternity in view, even a reckless child will feel it; and though the children of godly and consistent parents may become dissolute, it is long before they can sin like other men. They require to be inured and hardened awhile, ere they can both trample upon conscience and enjoy the pleasures of iniquity. Eternity, it has been said, rises up before them, like the ghost of Banquo before Macbeth, till they are compelled at least to compound with conscience, and sin with a mental reservation.

We are not so Utopian, indeed, as to expect a perfect example in any parent, for "there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." But truth, and the

Lord of truth, may surely expect consistency in parents, and that is what impresses the young. Do they see example steadily bearing upon a single point? Is it the endeavour of a parent to make the Bible in all things supreme? Is religion not merely an affair of show, or form, on set occasions, but habitual and unailing? Is all turned to Christ, as Bickersteth tried to do? Then such an example will, at least, check what is evil. It will impede the tendencies of the young heart, and though a youth may try to forget it, it will defy him. "I went to the theatre," said the godless son of a godly parent, "with one of my companions, to see 'The Minor.' He could laugh heartily at Mother Cole, I could not. He saw in her the picture of all who talked about religion; I knew better. The ridicule on regeneration was high sport to him—to me it was none; it could not move my features. He knew no difference between regeneration and transubstantiation; I did. I knew there was such a thing, and was afraid and ashamed to laugh at it. Parental influence," he adds, "thus cleaves to a man; it harasses him; it throws itself continually in his way."

But all this is little more than repeating truisms, and we notice next, that since God has placed such power in the hands of parents, how circumspect ought they to be as to look, and word, and deed! There is a young soul, or there may be ten, watching every movement, and regarding all that passes as a model to be copied—nay, if need be, gloried in. Enough for plastic infancy that a father or a mother said it—that is believed; that a father or a mother did it—imitation instinctively ensues; and that parent has not yet learned to watch for his children's souls who has not learned circumspection on this vital point. Even heathenism taught

that nothing impure should enter the home where a child resides; and the sentiment ought surely to be yet more powerful among those who name the name of Christ. Tendencies too minute to be noticed lead to effects too vast to be measured, and a single act may entail eternal results. As the down of the thistle, wafted by the breeze, carries the seed which is to be planted in some distant, inaccessible spot, the example of parents spreads an influence such as no eye but that of Omnipotence can trace; and it has been strongly but not too strongly said, that a chain in the hand of a demon could not more irresistibly drag children to ruin than the example of irreligious parents. They betray their helpless lambs to that roaring lion who seeks to devour; and who would not, therefore, press home the question, Am I incurring that danger?

To be practical, then, we ask once more, what must be the effects of a parent's example in a home where the world is enthroned, and where "the god of this world" is the guide, or the only divinity that is cordially served?

What must be the result when parents live in pleasure, and by the whole force of their example, teach their children all to do the same?

What must the end be, when the Word of God is set aside, and another rule substituted in its place—some fitful code of fashion or caprice?

What must be the effects when vice, or passion, or hatred, or gloomy partiality, or perhaps even patronage of sin, is common in a home, and has then the ascendancy of law? If serpents produce serpents, or eagles hatch eagles, such parents must be training their children for sorrow, unless some miracle of grace interpose. In a word, everything

proclaims that the example of parents, their fireside life, their conduct in common things, is that which is decisive for good or ill. When "the child's love of its mother is religion, and its reverence for the looks and tones of the father, morality"—that is, when parents have their little ones entirely in their power—such examples as have been mentioned must tend to the second death.

It is granted, again, that a godless parent's example may disgust a child; it may be employed by God to drive him to the Saviour. But too often it produces the opposite effect—it only drives the child into some other path of iniquity. How often has the son of a grasping miser proved a profligate spendthrift, because he had been pinched and starved by his parent's grovelling passion! But the general law is that the child copies the father; and like silly sheep, where a whole flock will plunge over a parapet into a roaring flood, because one of their number has done so before them, child follows parent, and generation generation to a terrible, a bottomless perdition.\*

It has been acknowledged again and again that the children of devout parents may be bent on self-ruin. They would imitate a worldly parent; but holiness is repellent, though it be the holiness of the Bible; and as such children love the wages of iniquity, they often hasten to earn them. But that is one thing: an unholy example on the part of parents is another; and of all the gloom which invests the future, no spot seems darker than that at which a worldly father is to meet his ruined child—the child whom he him-

\* Yet God is sovereign. "Father," asked a child of a Sabbath-breaking parent, "does God let us break his laws when we like?" The arrow went home, and the practice which prompted the question was abandoned.



self had professed and vowed to rear for God, and then led to destruction by walking before the little one in the broad road to death. It is sad to see the gray hairs of parents brought in sorrow to the grave by the sins of children, but is there less woe in the counterpart, when unholy parents lead their offspring to ruin by an unholy example?

And what gives solemn emphasis to all this is the fact that none but Christian parents can set a right example. None else can truly dedicate their children to God, for none else have dedicated themselves. All besides,

"In frantic competition, dare the skies,  
Or claim precedence of the Only Wise ;"

and can such parents really pray for their children with acceptance, or truly love their souls? Nay, a practical unbeliever must often contradict his lessons by his life, and a child need not be very old to detect how hollow are the precepts of such a father. Just as water cannot rise above the level of its fountain-head, it is not in the power of nature to rise above the level of earth ; and that man who is not guided by the grace or enlightened by the Spirit of God *must* be doing much to mislead or to ruin the objects whom he loves, perhaps, as deeply and as well as blindfold nature can. The Word of God alone, enthroned in the heart of parents, can supply an antidote to such perils, and happy is the Home where the supreme standard is law.

#### EXAMPLES.

There is no room for doubt or speculation upon the subject just considered. A thousand instances might be quoted of the disastrous effects of a godless parental example. Vain *then* are all attempts to impress or guide the young by

precepts or lessons ; the terrible fact which meets the eye, "My father tramples upon all these," sweeps them away as the tempest sweeps away a thread of gossamer. Let us look, however, at an example operating for good.

In early youth, Richard Cecil, as we have seen, was signalled by his waywardness, his bold and hardened infidelity. He frequented those scenes where license is turned into mirth, and godliness into ridicule ; and as one of the avowed despisers, he might have been left to "wonder and to perish."

But his mother was a woman of prayer, and her example, by her son's own confession, long continued a mystery to him. He could not help noticing that she was happy amid many sources of sorrow. He knew of enough to crush her, though she had had no trial but himself. Yet she bore up under it all, and enjoyed a serenity to which her son, the dupe of many lies, could never attain. The Bible, he saw, was to her a perennial fountain of gladness, or, at least, of meek resignation, and the sight baffled the philosophy of the young but able infidel. Now, it is said that melting snow will penetrate where torrents would roll off without occasioning injury, and in the same manner that mother's example penetrated that young man's soul. He had ridiculed Christ. She adored him as her Saviour. The one was wretched amid his panting pursuit of pleasure in sin : the other was happy under what might have broken her heart ; and that contrast at length awakened young Cecil to his folly. The proud scorner became a docile learner. Conviction of sin laid him very low ; his mother's example told him how he might be raised from the fearful pit ; he *was* raised, and made a burning and a shining light from whom hundreds learned the way of truth.

He had once felt that the Saviour stood much in the way of the sinner, and by ridiculing the Holy One, that blasphemer tried to make iniquity pleasant. But he found at last that the Saviour was the way to the Father: he walked there, and was saved, and out of that impious youth grace evolved a signal monument to the Redeemer's glory.

And all that resulted from a Christian mother's example. When others would have reviled, she prayed. When others would have cast out the reckless infidel, she bore with the sinner in the spirit of her Lord. When others would have exasperated by severity, she warned and wept, and her faith and patience were not in vain—nay, she won a soul. Like another Monica yearning over another Augustine, she prevailed; and her example proclaims aloud, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether both shall be alike good."

Further, as we glance back upon the history of the past, the eye is arrested by two historical characters weeping as they gaze upon the scenes before them. The one is the king of Persia, who looked upon his million of soldiers preparing for battle, and wept at the thought that in a few brief years all would have perished. His thoughts did not wander into eternity; he was excited to tears only by the vanity of the passing pageant, or of all who were marshalled so proudly before him. But the other of the two was the King of kings—the Son of God. He also wept when he gazed on the crowds who lay before him secure, not safe, in their spiritual death. His tears, however, flowed and fell for souls, not bodies. He would have saved them, but they would not be saved. He would have blessed them, but they would not be

blessed ; and Jesus wept for God dishonoured, and the soul's eternity made one of woe.

Now, these contrasted cases may exemplify two great divisions of parents. The body and time alone interest one ; the soul absorbs the soul of the other. If temporal misery or trial be averted, that suffices for one class : the other does not know peace till the soul be cared for and hopefully safe. To this object all is made subservient. Example, warnings, lessons, prayers, all converge upon that point. The result is—

“ A sacred and home-felt delight,  
A sober certainty of waking bliss ; ”

and that family is not yet pervaded by the Spirit of Jesus, where the heads of the household are not thus earnest, devoted, resolute in guiding the young aright. In a household—we repeat it again and again, for the maxim, though commonplace, is golden—in a household where truth and love preside, souls are the primary care ; and as they are also God's, his blessing may be expected when we are like-minded with Him.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE STANDARD OF HOME.

The Word of God—All the Word—And Nothing but the Word—The whole Armour of God—Fallacies—The Murmur of Selfishness—An Example—Painstaking unto Prayer—Benefit of a High Standard to Parents—The Great Struggle—On which Side are Parents?—Examples—C—— — A Seminary—Mrs Huntingdon.

In one point of view, the whole influence of the domestic constitution depends upon the standard which parents set up to guide themselves and their households. The question, therefore, here arises—While aiming at those results which the influences of Home are designed to produce, what is to be our model or our rule?

And as that question is important, the answer is ready—The Word of God—the whole Word of God—and nothing but the Word of God, can be the standard of a Christian Home. When inspiration gives directions for a Christian warrior, it both describes the armour, and commands us to put on every piece. We are not allowed to select what we please, and reject the rest—as if the sword were needful, but not the breastplate, or the helmet, but not the shield. Every portion is needed in its proper place, and to reject any part of the suit is vainly to arrogate a wisdom superior to that of Him who teaches our hands to war and our fingers to fight.

And in the same spirit, when a parent would proceed to

the right ordering of his household, it is to be done with the whole Word of God for his guide. He may not select what portions he deems right or needful, and reject the rest, as if *his* home did not need them. Various fallacies may solicit his deference. Prevailing customs—the necessity of indulging our children—the opinions and practices of other parents reputed exemplary or godly—these and other considerations may clamour for attention ; but however plausible they may appear, they all demand instant rejection, if they oppose the Word of God. Prevailing customs are not to be lightly outraged—but are they according to God's Word, or are they not ? The tender child is not to be overtaken, as if God exacted from him what only manhood can supply. But, in that case, the child is not the judge : it is not to him that the parent is responsible—and deference to him at the expense of God's truth can only pamper passion, or increase inborn tendencies to evil. The law and the testimony, therefore, form the supreme, nay the sole standard—and Home is happy just in proportion as that maxim reigns over all.

No doubt, children will feel aggrieved, as the selfish, young and old, ever do, when heavenly truth opposes human passion ; and that will increase a Christian parent's trials, for it is painful to thwart the objects of our affection, or be exposed to their unreasoning suspicions. But that parent, conscious of his love, will here take up his cross. He stands between two. He is the father of his children, but he is himself a child of God—and to evade or equivocate, when we know the will of a heavenly Father, can never lead to joy. His Word, then, without dilution or alloy, is the standard of Home ; and the more simply we cling to it, the more serene is the true peace of our families.

And that Word itself leaves no doubt upon this subject. Some of its sayings have been already quoted ; but we point to them again.

1. God's Word is to be in the parent's heart.\*

2. That Word is to be diligently taught to our children.†

3. To promote that end we are to talk of God's Word, when we sit in the house, or walk by the way—when we lie down, and when we rise up. However we are employed, it is at once our standard and our guide. As “the nurture and admonition of the Lord” can include nothing that is opposed to His will, that will is our sole and sovereign guide. Whatever supersedes it, or takes from it, or substitutes some other standard for it, however fair may be the pretext, is only a light to lead astray. In this way the words of a wise man are fulfilled:—“The child feels his parent's authority supported by the Bible, and the authority of the Bible supported by the parent's weight and influence.” Be the domestic constitution thus upheld upon its right basis, that is, the truth of God, and all is well, but upon any other principle, even the wondrous power of Home will be feeble against inborn evil, and all its efforts will prove as fruitless as an attempt to “stem a mountain stream with sand.”

All this, no doubt, demands painstaking ; but who can guide sons and daughters to glory without both pains and prayer ? An ever-watchful care is needed, but is that too much to be expected from those to whom God has intrusted the training of immortals ? If miners deep down in the earth, and fisher-

\* See Deut. vi. 6, 7.

† The Hebrew word means *to what*—implying frequent repetitions, and consequent acuteness.

men in their frail craft, amid the heavings of the sea, have sometimes carefully and statedly sought their God, shall parents, with their families around them, and at ease, really do less? It were pleasing to indolence to glide down the stream of custom, and be satisfied with the world's standard, to do as others do, and be what others are, but they are the "dead to God" who do so. "We will serve the Lord," are words which godly parents will inscribe upon their door-posts and lintels. Whoever may compromise God's pure truth, they will not. His standard shall be theirs, though they should be alone in upholding it; and as the reward of such a spirit, such parents will see their children rising up to bless them, though it may be after many days.

But, further: The erection of such a standard as God's in our Homes, may devolve upon parents the necessity of acting according to that standard themselves. There must be strict impartiality, for that standard admits of no favouritism. There must be due subordination, for that standard never sanctions disorder. The lax or the equivocal must be banished from that abode, or the standard of God's Word is there a perpetual protest against parents and children alike, and so in every case. But is not all this a blessing, and not a tax? May we not hope thus to check all incipient disorder? Is it not an advanced attainment to be able to say, "With me, it is a small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment?" Is it not thus that we practically learn the truth, "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them?" The Bible thus compels us to choose our side. It is manifest to a casual observer that a great struggle is raging in the world between the cause of God and that of the evil one. It began with Cain and Abel,



and has been widening and waxing keener and keener ever since their day. Now an attempt is made by the world to lower the standard,—by the church, to raise it : by the world, to tone down holiness till it melts into sin,—by the church, to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. To reinforce the world's position, a thousand plausibilities are urged :—The loss of worldly advantages, or social position ; the danger of over-strictness, or being righteous overmuch, are all pled that men may keep their homes as near the world's level as may be. But, on the other hand, some would see in their homes—

“ As much of heaven as heart can hold ; ”

and surely parents who love their children should thus take their place upon the side of heaven. If conscience be consulted with the Word of God for its light, there can be but one resolution in such a case on the part of every believer, and it is this :—Let the Word of the Lord endure for ever in my home, and everywhere besides. In a better spirit than Balaam's, that seer's words may then be employed—“ If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more.”

#### EXAMPLES.

It has been the complaint of some godly men, that even Christians are now rapidly adopting the maxims of the world in regard to the nurture of their children. It seems as if preparation for time were their aim, and not meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. By a cruelty which wears the garb of kindness, young souls are thus exposed to jeopardy, or, it may be, enticed to ruin. They are schooled

mainly for earth : they are permitted to tamper with the equivocal, and walk along the verge of spiritual death.

In other cases, however, God's standard is set up. C—— was born in Leeds : his parents were religious : they trained him in the ways of righteousness, and did what they could to plant betimes the seeds of immortality in his soul. It was done with apparent success. As the parents felt the power of truth, and deferred to the supremacy of God, they trained C—— to do the same, and he seemed to defer at least to their standard.

But his father died when the youth had reached his fifteenth year. He was then obliged to learn a trade, and with it he learned also the habits of a profligate. The standard of Home was no longer to his mind : he defied the restraints of a widowed mother, and fled from her vicinity that he might not be hampered by her urgency or example. For two years he led a guilty wanderer's life ; but on one occasion, during his Sabbath orgies, he was invited by an aged believer to enter a house of God which he was passing, in the company of one as lawless as himself. The suggestion awoke for a moment the recollection of former days,—he complied,—and the sight of parents with their children worshipping their God did for him what swine-herding and hunger did for the prodigal in the parable. The past affected the present, and the wayward youth was reclaimed. Though he passed through a terrible struggle, he happily emerged at the side most distant from the City of Destruction, and eventually proceeded to Africa as a missionary, where he laboured to win souls as he had formerly tried to ruin his own.

Now, had the standard of that youth's home been a worldly one—had he been trained, like many of the rising race, in the

world's way and not in God's—the sight of the worshippers in that Sabbath assembly would have been powerless over him. He could have beheld them without emotion, and passed away without any saving impression. But the echoes of the past floated back upon his soul—they entered it, like the music of our native land when heard in foreign parts. The standard set up in his home, and early imprinted on his memory, became a vivifying power—a moral fulcrum on which to rest a moral lever, and salvation was the result.

Another example might be found in the history of a certain Christian Seminary. It was the endeavour of those who presided there to regulate all by the heavenly standard, and, during the very first years of its existence, a goodly number of the young became hopefully decided for God. True, religion may be presented to youth tinged with the rigours of Sinai far more than the beatitudes of Zion. “Thou shalt not,” may be constantly rung in the ears of the young, and may utterly supersede “Come unto Me;” or, “It is I: be not afraid;” or, “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.” But, in that case, the standard is not the Scriptural one, nay it is a counterfeit or a caricature, and what wonder then though youth be repelled? But, let the Divine standard be adhered to, “pure and simple.” Let men just do with it what New Zealand mothers were wont to do with their children when they carried them to their idol temples, that “the spirit of the god” might there be infused. Then the blessing will be granted; for where the right standard is set up, right results may be waited for in hope.

And we know not how soon. Mrs Huntingdon has recorded that such was the standard presented to her, that about the age of three she was obliged to face the question—

"Shall I give my heart to God?" and, though her decision then was "Not yet," the right choice was made at last.— And President Edwards did not deem it beneath the majesty of his mind to describe the conversion of a child of four years of age, a child whom the heavenly standard had elevated, and made kindred with the spirit-world even while she dwelt on earth—such are the results which follow the believing use of God's truth. We should, therefore, attempt no unholy compromise with the world, nor ever try to buy its smile by bartering away any fragment of truth. God has not prescribed either too high or too low a standard; and there is happiness in the very attempt to be or to do what He has appointed in his word. A Home where the Bible is supreme is the only Christian one; and we approach the Christian standard only in proportion as the God of the Bible is enthroned and obeyed.

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## CHAPTER VI.

## THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOME.

A Parent's Position—A Family Group—Its employments—For what are Parents responsible?—Home should be Happy—The Happiness of Goodness—Not of masked Worldliness—The Priceless Freight—Promises Fulfilled—Examples—John C.—Others.

THE position of a parent is one of the most responsible upon earth. In one point of view, he holds the destinies of two worlds in his hands. The souls of his children depend absolutely upon him. As their purveyor, he provides for them: as a friend, he counsels; as a guardian, he tends. The power which wields all these influences is surely great, and a parent's responsibility is in proportion to his power.

To illustrate this,—see a parent seated in the midst of his family. There are five, six, or seven immortal beings waiting to be prepared by him for eternity. They instinctively ask to profit by his experience, or share his gathered stores of wisdom. As long as they are not corrupted by sin nor blinded by passion, that parent's word is law; it is a sufficient authority for all facts, and a sufficient reason for all arguments. To question that father's word were painful alike to the youngest and the oldest child. They may not yet have felt the force of the truth "thus saith the Lord," but "my father said it" is the *ultima ratio* of every well-conditioned Home.

Now, while this demonstrates the responsibility of the

parent, it may help us to understand to what that responsibility amounts.

He is responsible for regulating his own conduct by the truth of God, and so enforcing its lessons by his life, as well as by his lips.

He is responsible for explaining and applying that truth to the hearts and minds of his children. Facts, doctrines, and duties, as God has revealed them for our guidance to glory, are all to be made known.

And a parent is responsible for much prayer to God for a blessing upon all other means. As the minister of his little but beloved flock, he is to give himself to the ministry of the Word and to prayer on their behalf.

He is responsible, moreover, for upholding all due subordination and order. Under his roof the strong are not to oppress the weak, nor the cunning to overreach the simple and unsuspecting.

Farther: a parent is responsible for repressing evil by the rod, if need be, though it should never be appealed to till all else has failed.

Farther still: a parent is bound, or rather it is his privilege, to encourage all that is lovely and of good report. While he labours and prays to keep his little ones from the moral Maelstrom of the world's ways, he is to screen the tender germ of goodness from all that would nip it. Home is to be to it at once a genial climate and a kindly soil, that by the blessing of heaven the fruit may be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Or if we may glance at some details, a parent is specially responsible for teaching his little flock the lesson of the love of Jesus. It is by that love that the Father of the redeemed

family captivates all its members, and, if skilfully employed, it may melt—it may win or allure the young to him who loved them so well, and was much displeased when his followers, through a mistaken zeal for his dignity, sought to repel “the little children.”

A parent is responsible, further, for teaching his little ones that they are fallen, sinful, and without hope, except through Christ. He has to make plain the need of a sanctifying Spirit, as well as of a redeeming Saviour, and to unfold the parts of that amazing system, at once so simple and so profound, by which God would guide us through the wilderness of earth to the Canaan that is on high.

Or, once more: the parent is responsible for duties to himself, as well as to the domestic constitution over which he presides; and, in the sight of all these things, may we not ask—Is there a responsibility more solemn, a position more fraught with pleasure or with peril, than that of the father of a family? The whole counsel of God is to be his standard: he is to endeavour in faith, to make it the standard of his Home,—and “who is sufficient for these things?” The only adequate answer is—“I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord.”

It is the undoubted design of the Holy One, that Home should be happy. All the tones, the attitudes, the games, and the jubilant spirits of youth, testify to that, and it makes well-conditioned age happy, nay almost young again, to witness the glee of youth. But it is not more certain that our Homes are meant to be happy, than that they can be happy only by goodness—goodness according to the mind of God. It is not the insipidities of the frivolous that can make the young truly glad. It is not the indulgence of mere worldliness

— masked, perhaps, or gilded by some fair name, but worldliness after all. It is goodness ; it is innocence ; it is the will of God guiding them, that alone can conduce to happiness ; and for promoting that result parents are responsible to God. Yielding to blind fondness, and calling it affection, or to an indolence which makes all discipline a burden, that responsibility may be evaded, but it cannot be escaped. God has given power to the administrative head of the domestic constitution : for the use of it he is responsible, and, when used in dependence upon the promised grace, it will be influential, like the seal applied to melted wax, or the marble giving back to the plastic hand of genius the forms of beauty which appear to live and to move.

Parents, then, are sailing through a narrow channel where rocks and whirlpools abound. At the same time, the freight is priceless—it is composed of jewels fit to adorn the crown of the King of kings. Is a parent in such a case alive to his true position ? Has he discovered the value of those jewels of which he is the guardian ? Then he may well cry for help, for wisdom, for guidance. This feeling of responsibility is not meant to vex, or irritate, or chafe him, but only to urge him more to the ever-present Surety ; and when He is appealed to, a new name better than that of son or of daughter is given to the soul. The laconic but abounding promise, "As thy days, thy strength," will then be fulfilled. Such a parent may know that in one place of Scripture, at least, disobedience to parents stands condemned side by side with blasphemy, and as he would repress the one, he equally represses the other. He is thus found faithful. Where love does not succeed he appeals to law, and when this is done in the spirit of the Word, such a father has both delivered his



own soul and adopted the heavenly method of delivering the children whom God has given him. They may still resist, for sin can resist everything except grace. But the hope may be believingly cherished that grace will bless the means which the God of grace has appointed to be used.

## EXAMPLES.

John C—— was a wealthy and an influential man in the district where he dwelt. All was well-ordered in his home—for many years it was a model. Family worship regulated its affairs: he was a magistrate and honoured in his county. His wife as a “help meet” seconded his endeavours to do good, and it would have been difficult to say what more was needed to render such a Home as his a perfectly happy one.

But C—— had an only son on whom he doted, and whom he made an idol. That son accordingly became the father’s plague. By long indulgence the youth learned to defy authority; he mocked at what was sacred, and found his sport in mischief. The father wept over such waywardness, and amid much that might have made him happy, he was often very miserable.

Now, whence arose such precocious guilt upon the one hand, and such sorrow on the other? In one respect, at least, that father had set aside the Word of God. He supplied his son with money without asking any account of its expenditure. Stimulated passion soon demanded more and more to meet its cravings; the son thus preyed upon the father, and the Home which had once been a place of peace and of prayer, became a place of weeping. Now the root of this matter is that that father forgot his responsibility to God. The rod of correction was spared. He refused to take

up his cross and thwart his son. A foolish love to a creature had more influence in that parent's mind than a wise fear of God, and hence misery at once to parent and to child. It was a radical law of God outraged. It was conscience asleep, or worse—unheeded if awake. It was God put second. That father not merely withheld correction—he refused to let others tame the turbulence of his child; and when the scales fell from the eyes of the indulgent but now unhappy parents, they could trace their errors stage by stage to their source, and found them all originating in a dormant responsibility, or in ignorance of this truth,

“Father, I bless Thy gentle hand:  
How kind was Thy chastising rod!  
That forced my conscience to a stand,  
And brought my wandering soul to God.”

Here, then, is a speaking case. A youth is permitted to select his companions without restraint from his parents. Visits are paid, and long absences from home pass unchallenged, and unexplained: the house of God is abandoned, often with the consent of the parents; and crime was thus nursed by a blindfold love. But all the parties were filled at last with those fruits which are sure to follow oblivion of God, and the neglect of what is due to Him. The son became a robber, cloaked indeed from the eye or the punishment of man, but open in the sight of God. Madness, the result of his own excesses, gleaned up the fragments of his wasted soul. Infidelity became his stronghold against God and conscience. One of the most appalling sentences in the Word, that which speaks of “murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers,” was morally true of him, and it was a sad wreck that was witnessed when it was said of young C——, “He is dead.”

Now, all this was at least enhanced, as far as man can judge, by the want of a right feeling of parental responsibility. Had that feeling reigned in the father's conscience, he and his son might both have been blessed: as it was, that son was lost, while that father went in sorrow to the grave, weeping often over his own fatal error.

Nor was this a solitary case. Who cannot recall some parallel? Indulgent parents train their children amid affluence and ease, and far away from the wholesome restraints of the Bible. In process of time, even the feeble barrier of natural affection is swept down, while the father and the mother, who would not realise their responsibility to God, are cited at last by sorrow to the tribunal of conscience, there to confess and deplore the results of their training. They see the house of God neglected for the Sabbath excursion, but they offer no effective opposition. Debt is contracted, and to hide their shame, they pay it. The prodigal plunges from sin to sin, he drags his parents from sorrow to sorrow, and death or exile to himself, with life-long grief to them, is often the wages of such iniquity.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS OF HOME.

Laws and their Sanctions—Bribes—"Patriarchy" quoted—Rewards—Punishments—The Need of a Heavenly Guide—Principles in Punishing—Obedience—Evils requiring the Rod—Modern Infidelity on the Subject—How the Rod may be Spared—The Reins first—Examples—Rev. Thomas Scott—Others.

If a father be as a king over his Home, and if laws be passed to guide it, that legislation must be enforced by sanctions. If the enactments be violated, the violation must be punished: if they be obeyed, the obedient should feel that "in hearing the instruction of their father, and not forsaking the law of their mother,"\* there is a great reward.

And in regard to rewards, it should be remarked, that the domestic constitution is often radically violated in this respect. Children are bribed or allured to do what should be done upon soul and conscience. "In how many families is the heart indulged and spoiled as a reward for a little exercise of the head, and the child allowed to be self-willed and capricious as a reward for being clever! A little bit of finery is made the adequate reward of morality, and a small intellectual feat is taught to find its goal in something extra to eat and drink. A little violet-like virtue no sooner modestly peeps above ground than it is proclaimed, be-praised, magnified, and killed, or turned, by being made ever-present to the consciousness of the child, into a poison-

\* Proverbs i. 8.

plant. Show-children are got up and exhibited, as if they were as insensible to flattery as prize-poultry. Emulation is provoked in a manner which calls into activity some of the worst qualities of the heart."\*

Now, in such a case, a trespass is committed against another radical law; the whole nature is injured in the hope of rendering it good or accomplished. But if right exertions should be encouraged—and they should—let it be done in wisdom. Let rewards be given for goodness rather than for cleverness; for self-conquest rather than victory over others. Surely the gross rewards which only pamper juvenile sensuality, should be utterly discarded. The frivolous amusement, the stimulant to personal vanity, with all that tends to strengthen the merely animal, at the expense of the moral, in the young, should be dismissed for ever. Why should the reward not be some instructive visit to rural scenes? to some collection of natural curiosities? to something which would expand and inform the mind instead of pampering the body? something which would shew how good God is, or how dependent man, instead of inflating with pride, or fortifying in frivolity? No doubt, all this may tax a parent's ingenuity, as it will increase his trouble; but it is aversion to trouble that impedes right training in many cases; and he who would not be troubled by the waywardness of his child, must be careful to use the means to train him in what is right and true.

A wise parent, then, will take care that the rewards presented to his children shall be such as promote their moral health. Here, as everywhere, the Supreme Will must guide; and every other course will be found as futile as the attempt

\* "Patriarchy," pp. 223-9.

of a savage to compel a watch to move by external force, instead of winding it up. Let rewards be given in harmony with the true laws of our moral nature, and they may prove what the breeze is to the sail, what dew is to the flowers, or rain to the fissured earth. The Divine government is here to be our model ; copy it, and all will be blessed.

But, next, the subject of punishment is surrounded with dangers as great as that of rewards. To indulge the flash and outbreak of anger is easy. To punish merely because the parent's quiet or convenience is infringed, requires little skill. But to punish, as God appoints, in the spirit of blended love and firmness—to correct, but not in anger,—demands a wisdom and a tact, as well as a tenderness, which only grace can impart. Hence it happens that Homes are often the scenes either of unchecked transgression, or of violent assaults upon the young. Faults are not repressed in detail : they are allowed to accumulate till they become intolerable ; and then attempts are made to check by the rod, what should have been checked by the reins. Parents must now try to bend the gnarled oak, because they have neglected the sapling ; but all this is more akin to caprice and to cruelty than correction. Sin in every form must, no doubt, be confronted with the rod, if need be ; but to do that in the spirit of wisdom, and of a sound mind, demands the presence and the power of a heavenly Guide.

There are some outstanding points, however, which materially help a parent in this respect. For example, it is right that negligence concerning lessons should be punished by restraints in regard to play. Encroachment on the property or the pleasure of another points to some limitation of

that of the offender. But caprice, or violence, in correcting, will go far to justify the transgressor, in his own eyes at least; he will consider every appearance of injustice as a vindication of his own aggression. "Punishment," says the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, "must be varied according to the degree of fault. It is important that the scale by which we measure the degrees of wrong be scriptural. Sins directly against God, and moral faults, such as falsehood, passion, and taking anything that does not belong to them, call for the severest punishment, and should never be passed by without chastisement; while accidents from carelessness, though they may occasion a serious injury, should be visited with a lighter penalty, as not being intentional faults."\*

In the spirit of these suggestions, the time has surely come, when punishment, by assigning portions of Scripture, or psalms, or hymns, to be learned, should be abolished for ever. As if the antipathy of the young to the truth were not already sufficiently strong, such unwise measures infallibly strengthen it; and it were better to doom our children to climb some rugged mountain, or bear some heavy burden, when they err, than prescribe such tasks as give to the Word of God the character of a jailer, or associate it with bonds and imprisonments in the minds of the young. We may legitimately question that man's ability to train who adopts such a course.

But, to simplify this matter, some evils may be specified which demand instant repression. On the supposition that it has been made a law in the Home, that obedience shall be instantly yielded by children, that their happiness is prominently sought, and that finesse is never employed in

\* See "Domestic Portraiture," Introd., p. xiv.

ruling, the following offences are to be steadily opposed, and, if needful, punished :—

1. Disobedience to a father's authority, or trampling upon a mother's affection; in short, insubordination in the very bud. Toleration here is treason against both Heaven and Home.

2. Keeping company with fools. These are the wicked.

3. Everything akin to envy at a brother or a sister. That is not the spirit of Home, but of Hell.

4. Falsehood and deception in every form, and under every guise, as the sure presage of future ignominy.

5. Profuse expenditure, even when children have the means.

6. All that tends to pamper selfishness, that central power of most of the evils which reign in the homes of men.

And lastly—to name what is inclusive of all besides—whatever is fitted to lower the supremacy of the Word of God, or foster sin in any form in the soul.—These and similar tendencies are to be instantly repressed, and where parents neglect that, and consequently connive at such practices, they but treasure up pain for themselves when the day of their undeceiving arrives: they are throwing oil upon flames, or ventilating a blazing pile.

And this seems the proper place to consider the scriptural theory of the rod and its uses. One of the modern phases of infidelity, or one of our attempts to improve upon God's love and wisdom, would supersede the rod, and let youth grow up uncorrected at least by it.\* But it is remarkable that upon no duty are the Scriptures more explicit than this.

\* The tendency to this is no doubt increased by the use of the rod in gratifying passion. "When Dr ——— found that we had been idle, he would flog a whole form till he became pale and breathless, and unable to proceed. . . ."—Dr Cheyne's Autobiography, p. 3.



He who is Love is not so lenient as some earthly parents profess to be ; for what can be more distinct than this, "He that spareth the rod hateth the child, but he that loveth, chasteneth him betimes," or "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying?" This, no doubt, implies delinquency on the child's part, and not mere passion on that of the parent ; but where there is delinquency, correction is an ordinance of God. "Thou shalt beat him with the rod and deliver his soul from hell," plainly points in that direction, and there are children who will call their parents blessed for ever, because the waywardness of their youth was thus repressed.

It is conceded that the rod by itself can accomplish no good results : it may harden instead of subduing. But as one of God's appointed means, it is to be employed. Of Himself, with his mercy ineffable, it is said, "He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Correction from Him is even made a token of His love and His watchful care, and earthly parents, guided by His Spirit, are in love to do likewise. When needful, in brief, let the young bear the yoke in early years, and wisdom will follow : let them escape, and they may grow up like the wild ass's colt.\*

In our day, however, this subject has passed into a new phase. Such is the social condition of our empire, that in every large town many children grow up untaught, untrained, and uncared for. So numerous are they, and such is the extent of their depredations, that those who watch over the public safety are startled and perplexed. Now it is gravely argued by some, that the parents should be punished when their children are neglected. Little wanderers who are old

\* See the Divine theory of correction, Heb. xii 1-11.

enough to become public pests, are sometimes not old enough to be responsible, at least to public law, and the parents, according to some, should be dealt with in their stead. And whatever may be thought of such a proposal, it implies a tribute to the scriptural view of correction. It must be applied somewhere—if the child escapes, the parent should suffer.

It is possible, however, for a right-minded parent so to exert his influence that the mere possession of the rod shall be enough for nearly every child. It should in all cases be the court of last appeal, and if love be ascendant in our abodes as it ought to be, if parents live as they ought to do, that is for their children's well-being, if Home be made happy and only sin and folly repressed, if the minds of the young be habituated to the good and the true, a word, a look, a signal from the hand, will, in most cases, suffice. Let it just be felt in a Home that to lose a father's favour or a mother's smile is a dark event in the history of any day, and the office of the rod may become well-nigh a sinecure. It has been wisely said,\* that the proper use of the *reins* may all but supersede the *rod*, and if parents would tenderly and consistently repress in time, many a pang would be saved at once to themselves and their offspring.

Nor is this a theory without precedent in actual life. The Reverend Legh Richmond was never known to use corporal chastisement in his family. With him the rod meant the seclusion of the offender, for a time, from the joys and amenities of Home. The father's obvious grief pierced the little culprit to the heart, and banishment from that father's favour wrought as effectually, almost as instantly, as bodily pain could have done. Similar results appear in other cases, and

\* Anderson on the "Domestic Constitution," chap. v.

happy is that parent who, by living near the fountain of wisdom, is thus made wise to reclaim,—whose frown is a rod, and whose grief gives pain to offenders.

## EXAMPLES.

Rewards will be illustrated in a subsequent Section : upon Punishments we observe that when Alexander I. of Russia visited London, he ordered a watch of exquisite exactness to be made for him. All was to be as perfect as British science, taste, and mechanical skill could render it. The costly instrument was accordingly constructed, and in due time transmitted to St Petersburg. For some years it regulated the emperor's movements, and answered well the purposes for which it was made. But when the period came that repairs were needed, there was no mechanician in Russia who could rectify what was wrong, and the instrument was returned to its maker to be refitted.

Now the same thing happens regarding a still more exquisite machine—the mind of man. It is distempered and deranged by sin, and ere it can be refitted, its Maker must interfere. He has in wisdom done so, and if we would have that instrument first rectified and then kept right, the Divine wisdom must be consulted, the Divine plan strictly adhered to, for promoting these ends.

And the Reverend Thomas Scott, "whose works do follow him" in the homes of thousands, was one of those who closely adhered to the heavenly plan. After he had submitted to "the Force of Truth," his endeavour was to be guided in all things by the Word of God. For his children, he ever "sought first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," not doubting but that all else would be added.

And as to correction, he was decided in using it as an appointment of God. One of Scott's standing orders was this, "Fix authority under four years old. The only way of dealing with children is to convince them, 'If I do not do as I am bidden, I shall suffer for it.' Never let an offence pass unnoticed, under the fatal idea that they will know better when they are older." A child, moreover, was never allowed, in Scott's home, to gain his object by crying. Unyielding firmness, based on intelligent affection, was that father's guide, and he never bribed a child to insubordination by granting to outcry what was not due to right, or from affection.

This wise and judicious man, then, scrupulously acted on the maxims of Scripture regarding the rod. He did not apply it for small faults, nor would he punish a child for being a child, but only for being a wicked one, and calmly and with deliberation, as a thing productive only of pain to himself, did he inflict chastisement. And the restraint which he imposed upon his children was continuous, systematic, but affectionate; so that he was spared the sad necessity of compensating for early remissness by rigour at a more advanced period. As the result, witness after witness has risen up to testify concerning Scott that as his conduct was scrupulously Scriptural in this respect, his children grew up around him, happy in themselves, and blessings to him and to many. He confesses that to establish his authority over them, generally cost him a sharp contest, and sometimes more than one, in their early youth; but once established, all was comparatively easy. When the child discovered that the father was master, and meant to be so, or that the rod was the chief umpire between them, that settled a crowd of latent controversies.

That rod in the hand of love rectified all, and by thus adopting the heavenly guide—the Bible—a happy home, and lives of honoured usefulness resulted.

Again: a Christian parent was reduced to the necessity of chastising one of his sons who had transgressed a family law, and the painful duty was calmly and judiciously done, like one discharging an imperative responsibility. The fault was explained; its sin was pointed out; the rod was produced; a prayer was offered to God for a blessing on his own ordinance of correction, and the wayward one was both punished and reclaimed. Such is the Divine method, as opposed to the human substitutes; and were parents guided by reason, as they should be, which of the two would be preferred—the method which God appoints and employs, or the guidance of passionate affection? How different then the Scriptural appliance from that brutal treatment which warranted one young criminal to exclaim, “Oh, sir, whipping will do me no good. I know all about that. I have had enough of it before!”—and another to affirm, “My father licked me with a rope till the blood ran down my back, and my stepmother was watching!” This is the correction of the Slave Ship and the Middle Passage; the other, of affection, pained perhaps to agony, yet doing its duty at once to God’s truth and to the young.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## AMUSEMENTS FOR HOME.

Luther—Calvin—Brainerd—Infant Happiness—The Right Path made Plain—The Theatre—The Ball-room—Games of Chance—Real Amusements—Bodily Activity—Rural Scenes—Music—The Microscope—The Telescope—The Menagerie—The Garden—Parental Parties—The Children of the Godly—Examples—John Newton—Montague Stanley—Rowland Hill—Legh Richmond.

THE world too often attaches no notion to earnest, spiritual religion but that of bondage and gloom. Men's accounts of it are caricatures; their estimate is a prejudice or an antipathy, in as far as it is not ignorance. They regard the truth of God in its simplicity and power as fanaticism, and feel it to be altogether fettering.

On the other hand, they who know the truth, and whom the truth makes free, may enjoy the life that now is, as God's gift, with a fine and a delicate relish. To them, godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of two lives—the present, and that which is to come.\* Luther, for example, was a genial, joyous man, and likely to knit young and old to him by such a tie as renders two souls one—a love at once heart-deep and constraining. And Calvin, stern bigot as he is commonly supposed to have been, actually invented a new game by which he and his colleagues might unbend after their more severe employments, while they kept aloof from all that bore the mark of the world's frivolities. David

\* 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Brainerd, also, the devoted, the self-sacrificing, the honoured of God above most of the sons of men, has said that "diversions, rightly managed, increased rather than diminished his spirituality." As even the earth needs rest and change, if we would not see it producing only weeds, man needs relaxation, else premature disease would ensue, and Christians therefore seek to prevent that result by unbending.

They carry that spirit into their Homes. The minds of neither parents nor children can bear a perpetual strain, and it were cruel to repress the jubilee of young souls—the loud laugh, even though it should bespeak the vacant mind—characteristic of healthy, happy infancy. Home should be a scene of joy, chastened, no doubt, by the fear of God, yet radiant and cordial withal. Above all spots on earth, it should be the scene where men

"Sun them in the light of happy faces,"

and this raises the question, What should be the amusements of a Christian Home? What may a believer in Jesus countenance as relaxations for his children? In what may he lead the way, during the hours or the days when households unbend?

The answer must vary according to the rank of the Home; but there are principles which no difference in rank can modify, and these may be briefly indicated.

*First*, Christian parents would find their path made plain and easy could they at once establish the rule, that wherever the world resorts for amusement, their children shall never appear. This may seem hard, but it is as needful for the young mind as absence from pest-houses is needed for the body. According to the Bible, it is simply impossible for the Christian to coalesce with the world, *in any matter where*

*he has the power of choice.* If there be a spontaneous coalition, then there is kindredness. If there be kindredness, then Christ and Belial can be combined. Where the Christian cannot go as a Christian, he should never *choose* to resort at all; and this would infinitely simplify the course at once of the parent and the child. Whatever attractions there may be in

“ Katterfelto, with his hair on end  
At his own wonder, wondering for his bread,”

a believer will desire some better kind of pastime for his children, and will resolutely seek it.

On this subject, one well qualified to speak has said—  
“ Within the hallowed walls of that house, which Jesus has honoured as the habitation of his Spirit, resolve that there shall be no parties where he is not welcome as the first and most honoured guest : no society in which he is not wished or cannot be asked to take the foremost place : no amusements calculated or contrived to shut him out from your hearts, as if you deemed him ‘an intruder on your joys,’ or wished to be happy in forgetfulness or independence of him : no reading or conversation which you would not wish him to hear, because you feared that he would listen to it with an angry frown : in a word, no plans unregulated by his approbation—no pursuits unhallowed by his blessing—no pleasures unsanctified by his smile.” \*

Now, this general rule disposes of a hundred casuistical cases. No doubt, if we are not averse to skim the verge of the forbidden, reasons may be found for frequenting equivocal scenes ; and the world, rejoicing in the countenance of a reputed Christian, will hail and commonplace his arguments

\* See “Jesus Invited to the Marriage,” also, “The Forbidden Marriage,”—two solemn “Meditations,” by Rev. Hugh White.



for meeting worldly men upon their own favourite ground. But such arguments are only cobwebs for weak minds, or minds willing to be entangled; and even though the men who use them may be able to stop short of the forbidden, many of those who are cheered by such examples cannot: they will not: they may plunge over the precipice to whose verge they have been conducted; they quote the favourite authority, and then dive into the bottomless abyss.

*Secondly*, The theatre, as it now exists, is at once to be abandoned by every friend of the young and of the soul. It is needless to speak of some ideal condition of a theatre, such as Utopianism loves to depict, though the picture be only a refuge of lies. In pleading for such an ideal, men forget that it has no existence, and they ignore the real—the real pollution—the real blasphemy—the real profligacy—the real ruin which are paramount in theatres and their purlieus. We just take the theatre as it has been, as it is, and is likely to continue. We look at its neighbourhoods in London, and in every city which a theatre pollutes, and we are blind if we do not notice that it is invariably a focus of moral abomination—the mother of guilt and of misery. It panders to the vilest passions; it fosters blasphemy; it cherishes hatred to God's truth; it multiplies temptation; it helps to fill our jails, and to people our penal colonies: for it patronises vice in some of its most revolting forms. We do not speak of what takes place behind the scenes, or of its debasing effects upon actors.\* We speak only of what is plain, patent, and undeniable—established by police-books, by criminal calendars, and by Botany Bay; and urge the questions as others

\* It is well known that a celebrated tragedienne of a past age forbade her daughter ever to appear in the green-room.

have done—Why does the swindler love the theatre? Why does the gambler? Why does the forger? Why does the man who never bends the knee to God in his own home? Why does the profaneswearer? Why does the godless son of godly parents? Why does the pilfering apprentice? Why does the shameless woman? Why does the embezzling clerk? Why do all such love the theatre, and find it their congenial Home? The radical reason is, God is not there—sin is ascendant—it is cheered—it is made a source of merriment, not a curse.

Seeing, then, that all these classes love the theatre as it actually is, a Christian will shun it, and debar his children with all his authority from ever entering there. Such scenes are immedicable moral blots; they admit of only one remedy—they should be swept away; they exist only for the godless and the gross. No man durst enter there, if the Word of God were his guide; and it is only while men ignore it that they can frequent the polluted precincts. The parent who takes his children thither is smoothing their way to ruin. Even Socinianism, by the lips of Channing, has boldly said, “The theatre is an accumulation of immoral influence: it has nourished intemperance and vice,” and darker disclosures than he has made are connected with an institution which gathers unto itself all the elements of impurity, of drunkenness, and of dishonesty. By degrading virtue and extolling vice, the theatre stands self-condemned wherever the Bible is the standard.

*Thirdly*, Some other very common amusements are in like manner to be put away; they can be encouraged and relished only by the frivolous, and by “lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God.” To be able to enjoy the flaunting insipidities of a ball-room, for example, seems proof sufficient that the soul has not yet discovered the fulness of joy.

Scenes where the pride of life is pampered into overmastering force are neither for believers in Jesus nor for those whom God has given them ; and we accordingly notice in all biographies, as well as in the conduct of all earnest, living men, that as soon as the Saviour gets his place in the heart, such frivolities are for ever put away. That remarkable Christian hero, Captain Hedley Vicars, wrote, soon after his conversion—"I have of late refused every invitation to such amusements, on finding they made me less earnest and thoughtful, and indisposed me for reading and prayer." We do not argue merely from the loss of time implied in such things—important as that and kindred considerations are—we go to the root of the matter, and proclaim balls to be just the spirit of the world intensified, and opposed to all that a believer in Christ should relish or rejoice in ; and to be unconscious of this antagonism, is to be incapable of judging in the matter—as the blind are unfit to judge of colours. To pamper the love of display, and a taste for vanity, can upon no pretext become a Christian duty, or be a Christian relaxation ; and all that tends to encourage such things is to be opposed by those who love young souls and are responsible for them to God. Beyond all question,

"E'en in their pastimes they require a friend  
To warn and teach them safely to unbend ;"

but they can never safely unbend amid what infects their moral nature with a deep and deadly virus.\*

\* "No doubt she [the daughter of Herodias] was a most accomplished person—danced well, and moved in the best society, so called, for she lived at court. But the noise of the viol and the tabret has long ago ceased with her ; and, perhaps, a frantic spirit in hell, she spends eternity with that charger before her eyes always, and that head, the price of that dance, haunting her from one deep to another deep in the bottomless pit. 'O mother, mother,' she cries, 'you taught me every worldly accomplishment, and also, by your example, to forget God, and brought innocent blood on my soul ! Take this head from before my eyes !' Her wretched mother

*Fourthly*, The same remarks apply in spirit to all amusements implying chance, or gambling. There is in them a vitiating element which all who value the peace and the purity of home will scrupulously shun. There may be many reasons pled for such things by those who love them: to a Christian, one reply answers all pretexts—they waste the soul—they fortify the world—they imperil eternity. "*Gambling*," Trench says, "may be, as with a fearful irony it is, called *play*, but it is nearly as distant from *gambolling* as hell is from heaven."

Still, however, the young mind must have amusement. The body as well as the soul must be studied, and it is the glory of Home that both are there kept in view. It were cruel to withhold relaxation—where, then, shall it be found?

*First*, Bodily activity, and all that promotes that end, conduces to the happiness of childhood, if the means be pure. Study the gambols of a class just dismissed from school, and learn a lesson there as to one kind of enjoyment for our children. See, there, intensified joy.

*Secondly*, Rejoice amid the sights and the scenes which God has beautified, where He is displaying His love or His power in the teeming grandeur or the sunny glories of nature, and teaching young and old, if they will learn, to exclaim—

"There 's not a strain to memory dear,  
Nor flower in sacred grove,  
There 's not a sweet note warbled here,  
But minds me of Thy love."

*Thirdly*, There is music—"designed to prepare for heaven,

has anguish enough of her own to bear, without the addition of her daughter's curses. Yet will not those curses follow her and every mother who brings up her daughter for this world only? Are they the only mother and accomplished daughter that will have this present world for their only portion, and endless sorrow at the end of it? 'I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'"—"The Friends of Christ," by N. Adams, D.D. Sermon iii.

to educate for the choral enjoyment of paradise, to form the mind to virtue and devotion, and to chase away evil, and sanctify the heart to God. A Christian musician is one who has a harp in his affections, which he daily tunes to the notes of the angelic host, and with which he makes melody in his heart to the Lord. Does he strike the chord with his hands? It is to 'bid lute and harp to awake to the glory of God.' The hand, the tongue, and the ear, form a kind of triple chord not to be broken."\* Now, that exquisite gift of God might minister largely to the happiness of the young. And there is painting—when they have a taste for it—which furnishes a pure and tranquil pleasure, such as the recorded experience of Henry Martyn testifies the Christian alone can fully enjoy. After his conversion, he was blessed at once in the Giver and the gift—before it, he had only the gift, and how infinite the difference!

Or, *fourthly*, There are the sights which Science shews, the thousand amusing devices now happily common for blending relaxation with instruction, or informing the mind without overtasking its strength. Who has not seen the microscope enrapture, and the telescope amaze? And why has the Holy One told us of the sweet influences of Pleiades, or the bands of Orion, or Mazzaroth, or Arcturus with his sons,† but to point our thoughts upward to their glory? Moreover, a magic lantern has rivetted many a happy group for hours; and what youth, uncorrupted by the world's pollutions, can weary of the wonders of ocean, earth, or air? The mere wing of a gnat, when magnified, has delighted

\* Rev. Legh Richmond.

† Job xxxviii. 31, 32.

crowds of the young.\* And then the menagerie is a very mine of joy. Shew a child the love-birds, and he sees a model for brothers and sisters ; point to the lion, and he is the type of the destroyer of souls ; or the bird of paradise, and it furnishes hints at least of the beauty which is there. The bear reminds the young of the youthful scoffers of old, and their sudden doom for their scoffing. "The stork, the crane, and the swallow," may all gladden and amuse, while they gratify curiosity and store the mind. Preparation for such a visit might occupy the leisure of one week, and storing up its lessons might well employ the leisure of another.

Or, farther, conduct a group of children to a garden, and what lessons there cluster round the lily, the rose, the apple-tree—in a word, round all from the cedar to the hyssop, if the parent be a Christian ? How loving is God to have spread such beauty before the eye of man, and filled every inch of earth with such tokens of His care ! True, we repeat, such painstaking involves a tax upon indolence ; parents must be active, if children are to be thus amused ; but wherever the power and the privileges of Home are understood, such a tax will be a joy, most gladly paid, and a thousand times rewarded.

Or, finally, we have the engagements which parental affection plans, and the parties in which it shares, to promote the pleasure of the young, when family meets family and all are made happy in the only way that is open for Christians—according to the Word of God. It betokens a meagre mind to be limited to the same dull routine of enjoyments, when He who is rich in mercy has spread out so many

\* Read with care the chapter "Of Recreation," in one of the most suggestive of modern Books, Tupper's "Proverbial Philosophy."

before us ; and the parent whom He makes wise will draw freely from such ample stores. Such a father will not deem it below him to share in the pastimes of his children ; for if the Earl of Mansfield, even when he was Lord Chief-Justice of England, delighted to romp with the inmates of his nursery, and so to make both himself and them more happy, no father need fear a diminution of his dignity by the gladness of his deportment. Nay, rather he will try to invent amusement, and become to his little ones a companion as well as a father—a loving, sympathising, joyous friend as well as an authority, or a power repressing all that is evil.

## EXAMPLES.

John Newton was a man who had fathomed all the depths of iniquity, and exhausted the round of earthly pleasures. When he spoke against them, he condemned what he knew by experience better, perhaps, than any minister of his time.

Now, on the subject of the theatre, Newton has left on record his calm and matured opinions. As a place of amusement, he deemed it a great fountain-head of vice. He could scarcely suppose there was a Christian upon earth who would dare to be seen there ; and he thus inscribed indelibly before all who will read it, his utter and intelligent condemnation of what crowds of the misguided deem innocent amusements. He wished all such places to be shunned as pest-houses, and pled with men with his whole soul to forsake them for ever.

Again, Montague Stanley was for several years upon the stage,\* and his habits were then in harmony with those which prevail among the class who figure there. He even proceeded so far on the world's broad road as to fight a duel, and

\* See his Life, by Rev. D. T. K. Drummond.

amid some remains of natural religion, continued to win the world's smile, as one of its own. But Stanley at last escaped, like a bird from the snare of the fowler. The truth took hold upon his conscience, and in its light, he soon detected the snares which his profession laid for his soul on the right hand and on the left. Compromises were now attempted, and by omitting blasphemies or grossness from the parts which he acted, he endeavoured to keep down God's voice within; but he could not succeed, and felt at last that he must either abandon the stage, or lose his soul. He discovered that he was in conflict with his God, and instead of supplying amusement, was sinfully tampering with woe. He accordingly abjured what he called an ungodly profession, and in doing so, furnished another proof of the utter antagonism which exists between the truth of God welcomed into the heart, and such employments as the theatre devolves, or such pleasure as it bestows, upon men. He had to flee from it like Lot from Sodom or Paul from Damascus.

Let it never be thought, however, that godliness and deep devotion are hostile to relaxation. Nay,

"Religion does not censure or exclude  
Unnumber'd pleasures harmlessly pursued."

One of the most devoted ministers that ever lived was Rowland Hill; and yet his zest for innocent recreation was as great as his love of labour for Christ's sake was intense. For relaxation he resorted to handicraft: he was an assiduous gardener; he wove nets; he had pet animals, whose habits he studied, and whose gambols were his favourite amusement. His ever active spirit thus sought its relaxation in change of employment. That the mind might rest, the hands were



busy ; and amid many perplexities, or eager controversies, Hill's was one of the sunniest lives ever spent by man. Now, the lesson of that life is this—moroseness is not Christianity ; but still less is sin. The religion of the Prince of Peace is not asceticism ; but still less does it permit us to seek our amusement where vice is depicted as excellence and virtue turned into mockery. Such things the Saviour would banish from the hearts and the homes of all his people, and men are already deeply deceived, when the things which He condemns can ever yield them joy.

These examples, however, mainly shew what we are to abjure—but what is it that we should substitute in their place ? What amusements should we encourage at once as rewards and relaxations to youth ?

To exemplify this, the case of the Rev. Legh Richmond is perhaps the best that can be quoted. His life was a happy though a tried one. His temperament, his pursuits, his successes as a minister, and his mercies, all tend to that result. Home was to him the focus of his own felicity, as he was the centre round which its gladness gathered. To promote its happiness, his plans were both elaborate and successful. He enlisted whatever was beautiful in nature, or ingenious in art, or wonderful in science. He fitted up a museum, and gathered specimens for it from far and near. Philosophical instruments were employed to illustrate what needed such aid. The microscope, the telescope, the air-pump, and electric-machines were all found in his lecture-room in the parsonage of Turvey. Books from all lands, and specimens along every channel were collected to blend solid instruction with necessary recreation, or mingle philosophy and science with amusement ; and though many may be unable to com-

mand appliances so costly, all may learn how ingenious Christian affection may become in inventing substitutes for the frivolous or the debasing amusements which are so rife and so ruinous in the Homes of the worldly.

Amid the flaunting insipidities of a ball-room, a devotee of pleasure was once arrested and drawn from such haunts by the thought—"What! an heir of God, redeemed by the blood of his Son, and thus employed!" It proved the turning-point in a soul's history; and were parents alive to the importance of the truth then uttered, they would become at once more zealous to furnish right amusements for their children, and more lynx-eyed in warding off the wrong. It would become their endeavour unto prayer to be guided here by the heavenly wisdom, so that they might neither harshly repress young happiness, nor sinfully promote young devotedness to folly. All will be well where the Word of God is made supreme—till then the world will reign and souls will perish.

## CHAPTER IX.

## COMPANIONSHIPS FOR HOME.

The Bible's View of them—Experience—Duty—Results of its Neglect—Or of Counsel Spurned—Boasting of Ungodliness—Moral Wrecks—Our large Towns—Examples—Hon. Francis Newport—Rev. Legh Richmond.

It is recorded concerning the Rev. Legh Richmond, that so sensitive was he on the subject of the company which his children kept, that he once spent a sleepless night in the prospect of a visit from some youths to his Home. So thoroughly was he aware of the moral blight which might result even from a brief interview, that he could not calmly contemplate promiscuous intercourse among the young; and though in some respects his convictions might be exaggerated, or his feelings morbid, it were well if far more parents were watchful on the subject, somewhat in Richmond's spirit.

The deliverance of Scripture regarding it is very precise, "The companion of fools shall be destroyed." Fools, in the language of Scripture, and especially of the Proverbs, mean the wicked—and in mercy, God has warned us that their companions are on the way to destruction.

And common experience illustrates these words. Who does not remember how his own life has been influenced by his companionships in opening manhood, as well as early years? If there was any dawning of good, it perhaps became evil; if there were evil habits before, they were made worse

by such means. Next to a mother's moulding power ranks that of a favourite or an admired companion : his influence in thought, word, and deed, in tone and gesture, in antipathies or likings, goes with us to the grave and the great white throne.

Now, all this points out to parents the necessity of watching, as earnestly as if they were upon their knees, what company their children keep, or what friendships they form. Though the fear of God may reign, and his worship be maintained at home, though godliness may be encouraged, and every wicked thing repressed, an hour with a godless companion will more than counteract the whole. The impure and the profane, amid the excitements of play, may infuse—they have infused—a virus which no painstaking can extract. The tendencies of the young are all downward. Their native affinities are all with wickedness, whatever a doating affection may often suggest. The restraints of holiness are irksome, and hence the need of a kind supervision, if parents would not see their children bounding forward in the broad road. He who would not spend his closing years in sorrow over the waywardness or the ruin of his children, has need to watch unto prayer against unholy companions.

But the subject need scarcely be continued : the truths connected with it are axioms. In our homes, as well as in our gardens, there are

" Noisome weeds that without profit suck  
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers,"

and we may as wisely hope to handle pitch without defilement, as suffer our children to associate with the unprincipled and yet keep them pure. The carnage of the battle-field is not more fatal to men's bodies than godless associates are to their souls. Ask those who are on the way to the scaffold,

where their guilt began. Go to some penal colony or some felon penitentiary, and make inquiries there. Penetrate to the terrible dens where vice celebrates its orgies or holds its nightly carnival, and prosecute your inquest there. The same reply in substance will everywhere be heard—I became the companion of fools, and here I am—self-destroyed. A wise counsellor has said that the first impure or improper expression from a companion's lips should be the signal to forsake his company, and multitudes who are now hopelessly entangled will lament for ever that that counsel was not obeyed.

Were it needful, the dangers of evil associates might be shewn in a hundred ways. Take only one. Augustine and many more have recorded, that while they lived in sin and associated with the godless, they actually pretended to have committed sins which they had never perpetrated. The appalling boast was designed to purchase a ~~bad~~ pre-eminence among profligate companions, and few things could let us see farther into the dark depths of even young souls than such traits. To feign iniquity, and glory in that, appears to be a near approach to loving sin for its own sake, yet such things are too often fostered by the unhallowed companionships in which the young delight to indulge, where they stimulate each other as fire feeds fire. Against such associates, the Bible and natural affection, time and eternity, all combine to urge every parent to watch.

Only Omniscience could compute the havoc which is wrought from year to year in our large towns by the effects of evil company. All that seemed promising in the shade of some moral home, is there often blighted and destroyed. There are some among the aged who find a diabolical delight in

tempting and triumphing over the souls of the inexperienced who come within their grasp. Creatures in the shape of men have thus derived a portion of their satanic happiness from trampling upon modesty, and making their victims the children of hell like themselves. It is chiefly, however, among the youthful that snares are laid for those still younger, and it is there that triumphs are achieved which may break a father's or a mother's heart. Compared with such moral deaths, what would it have been to such parents to have seen their son, their earthly hope, prematurely cut down, and laid among the rude forefathers of the hamlet in the cold churchyard? What would it have been to see fever or consumption wasting the body, compared with the sight of sin rioting in the soul, or the second death the only sure portion which remains, after God has been forsaken, the curse welcomed, and the blessing thrust away?

Now, one of the safest antidotes to all this is—let parents associate as much and as genially as possible with their children. That will both check the evil and encourage the good, and benefit both child and parent.\* The young heart is constitutionally sociable, communicative, sympathetic. But it is also artless. If it do not find the good at hand, it

\* This is well brought out by a Christian mother, who says—"We should not merely take an interest in our children's concerns, but encourage them to take an interest in ours. They ask about the war, the meeting of the General Assembly, Courts of law, the Queen, Parliament, Banks, in short whatever they hear older people talk of; and the common plan is to get rid of their inquiries by saying—These are not things which a child can understand. On the contrary, I believe there are very few subjects which a child may not in some degree understand. . . . Their remarks and suggestions should always be listened to and fairly discussed. This would be the surest mode of preventing that wide gulph of separation between children and parents, which is sometimes found to exist when children are grown up, and each party discovers with sorrow that they have no views or ideas in common."

will cling to the evil, and parents who know that tendency have need to watch it well.

## EXAMPLES.

We might almost epitomise the annals of crime to furnish examples here. The personal recollection of every reflective father and mother may furnish some case to illustrate the influence of evil company. It spreads many a moral wreck through society, as the tempest strews the freight of many a noble ship over the shore or the sea. We give one example.

The Hon. Francis Newport was blessed with a religious education. When about sixteen years of age, he was sent to one of the English universities, and continued to study there, with exemplary earnestness, for several years. During all that period, his conduct was in beautiful harmony with his religious training; he was even deemed an honour and a blessing to his house. It seemed as if he had already escaped all the perils of youth—had

"Shot into port at some well-haven'd isle,  
Where spices breathe, and brightest seasons smile."

But after leaving the University, or when he was about twenty-one years of age, young Newport proceeded to London to commence the study of law. Among his new associates there, his religion not seldom exposed him to raillery, but for a time he could calmly repel it all. He told his assailants that laughter was not argument, and challenged them to reason. At length, however, sap accomplished what an assault could not effect. The poison of unbelief was gradually distilled into his soul, by the very frequency of those sneers, and the ceaseless bite of those sarcasms, and Newport became both the companion of fools and the dupe of his own deceitful heart.

He even consented at last to be enrolled as a member of a society which was wicked by rule, and which plotted mischief with systematic painstaking. He who had recently given such promise or displayed such firmness, betrayed the secret of his strength when he agreed to associate with the godless, and soon displayed as high a spirit in sinning as abounding temptations, and ample means, and many accomplishments enabled him to do. He drifted at length down the moral rapids upon which he had launched, self-deprived alike of pilot and of helm.

But sickness came, and Newport awoke to self-respect and truth once more. His companions, indeed, strove to stifle and suppress his rising convictions, as if by the hug of a boa, but they could not succeed. He felt God's truth in its power, and so discovered the vanity of man's lie. Like Francis Spira, he forestalled destruction, in spite of entreaty, argument, tears, and prayers from those who loved him well. With his last breath he gasped out the words—"Oh, the insufferable pangs of damnation!" and when he died, it was without one ray of hope. Many may die and have no bands in their death,\* but it was not so with this misguided youth. He had once made his home happy, and was deemed both its ornament and its blessing: but with the distinctness of a voice from the eternal world, his case now proclaims that "the companion of fools shall be destroyed." It is the story of ten thousand souls.

Or to exemplify the painstaking which some parents have felt bound to exercise on the subject of companions for their children, we may recur again to the life of the Rev. Legh Richmond. When one of his sons was about to leave home

\* Ps. lxxiii. 4.



for the University, his father was unhappy in the prospect of the approaching peril. Nor was that wonderful when we read, as already noticed, that he allowed no intercourse with other families, except under his own watchful eye. He even declined invitations for his children from personal relatives, with whom he himself could freely associate, for his determination was to sacrifice all considerations of interest, and even of courtesy, rather than expose his children to corrupting influences. His conduct might be blamed, and no doubt it was so, but he was well persuaded in his own mind; and gentle as his nature was, he faced all misconstructions, for the sake of what he believed to be his children's welfare, their eternal safety, the purity of home, and the honour of his God.

Nor did this watchful parent relax his endeavours after the maturity of his children. In letter after letter—by warning upon warning, and rule upon rule—he sought to counteract the dreaded danger. As the warrior of old was employed to carry the heart of Bruce to the Holy Land, and by the way, guarded it with all the care of a passionate devotee, did this father devotedly attempt to fence off his children from peril, and carry them in his own company to the better country, even the heavenly. Home arrangements, visits to others, and visits from them, letters, books, studies, all in short, in Richmond's domestic life, were regulated by his desire to select right companions for his children; and if his watchfulness be deemed excessive or morbid by some, is the other extreme a safe one—that of permitting children to roam at large, or choose for themselves, unchecked, unwarned, unguided?\*

\* See "Domestic Portraiture," by Rev. E. Bickersteth.

## CHAPTER X.

## BOOKS FOR HOME.

The Three Chief Books—The Key to All—Sir William Jones—A Mother's Advice—Parables—Fiction—Novels and Novel-Reading—The Pilgrim's Progress—Robinson Crusoe—Amusement in Books—Childish Books—Poison—Food—Antidotes—Low Moral Principle side by side with the Love of Fiction—The Duty of Parents—Examples—Wilberforce—And others.

THERE are three books which all should study to some extent, if they would not only be learned but wise—the book of nature, the book of their own heart, and the book of God. The last is the key to open or explain the other two, and is therefore the first and most important of all. It forms a literature as well as a religion: it has been called, what it is, a library.

Yet besides these there are many other books which should be read—some of them studied—and without advert-  
ing to such as professional training demands, we would briefly allude to those which promote or which hinder the happiness of Home.

When Sir William Jones, as a child, asked his mother for information upon any subject, her answer often was, "Read and you will know," and that reply made that boy at last one of the most learned men of modern times. But just in proportion to the moulding power of our reading should be a parent's care regarding what his children read, and next to the injurious effects of evil company may be ranked the vitiating influence of unprincipled, irreligious books.

When we remember who it was that conveyed heavenly truth by Parables—that is, by means of imaginary persons or events—the prodigal and his father, for example, we are called on at once to welcome that as an admirable instrument for reproof, or correction—for shedding light, imparting wisdom, or alluring man away from his folly and his sin. It would be difficult to tell how much of the sound religion which circulates among men owes its origin to these wondrous pictures. When we come, however, to speak of works of fiction properly so called, it does not appear that the rising race would suffer much though they were all swept away. “Truth is strange—stranger than fiction;” and were truth wisely or winningly employed, it would accomplish all that books need aim at in our homes. The parent who allows his children to gloat over novels is fostering distorted views of life, and inculcating, by his connivance at least, the false principles with which such productions abound. False sentiments, misplaced affections, erroneous morals, and hatred to the truth of God, are produced by too many of this class of books; and the parent who would not see his home infested with these moral sores, should watch against the power of such productions. They may be signalised by genius, as some of them are, but it is too often godless genius. They may contain much knowledge of human nature, but it is often presented in forms far worse than ignorance. No friend of the young, who makes the Bible his standard, can doubt that such books often affect the mind as drunkenness affects the body—they displace and distemper our motives and principles of action, and a child reared according to such maxims as they too often embody would be rendered inept for life.

It is no doubt possible for a mind of matured principle to peruse such works, and reject what is injurious, or to admire genius, yet condemn the sentiments it has recorded. But even that is attended with a deadening danger. A mind thoroughly imbued with the high truths of God could not endure such insipidities, such distorted pictures of man, as are often presented; while to suffer children or youth to grow familiar with these, is too often to pre-occupy the mind with what renders real life insipid. Things are judged of by a false standard—souls are duped to deeper ruin; and the whole question so often agitated regarding the reading of novels might be disposed of by this one consideration—Are those who make them the staple of their reading generally guided by the Word of God? Do they in their life embody the practice which that Word enjoins? Do they even try it?

A high authority\* has pled for works of fiction as “giving a stimulus to the conceptive faculty altogether of a peculiar kind.” Dr Vicesimus Knox has urged the same plea; and there is truth in it as applied to works of pure fiction, like the Arabian Nights, and similar productions. But can the conceptive faculty be stirred in no other way? Must our children be sent to the false to be enabled to grasp or enjoy the true, to the painted to learn to prize the real? Such educationists, however, exclude “mere novels, . . . . whether better or worse,” from their plans;† and with this restriction the friends of the young find the question greatly simplified.

But to take examples. In one point of view the Pilgrim's Progress is a work of fiction. The dream was never dreamed:

\* “Home Education,” by I. Taylor.

† Ibid., p. 261.

the persons who are there named and described never actually existed. Yet that which is a work of fiction, in one point of view, is purest, noblest truth, in another, and the principle which would proscribe it must be erroneous.

Again : Robinson Crusoe is a work of fiction ; at least, no one can separate the facts from the fancies of the book—yet who would proscribe it? What a blank would be created in many a young mind were its incidents blotted out, or the future use of the volume forbidden? Now, these and similar exceptions warn us to be judicious in our exclusions. They tell us that it is not by a sweeping proscription, but by a wise restriction, that the evil influence of fictitious works is to be corrected.\* Let the principles which came from heaven to guide the children of men be instilled into the young. Be the Great Guide and final Judge made the umpire in every doubtful thing, and in due time our children will be taught utterly to discard all such works as would blunt the edge of their piety. They will either do as Augustine did soon after his conversion, when he cast aside his half-idolised Cicero, because it contained no allusions to Christ, or they will so read and so mark as to reprobate the unscriptural, while they admire the genius, prostituted as it often is.

But books for amusement the young have a right to expect from us. Just because the mind is infantine it demands something different from the volumes which fathers and mothers can relish. For that purpose, however, there is no need to recur either to unreal scenes or to distorted pictures.

\* Mr Taylor, in "Home Education," p. 264, has said—"Certainly I could find no fault with parents who should interdict Sir Walter Scott's novels, one and all." We indorse the sentiment. They should be religiously kept from children,—at least till principle is so far matured as to be able to separate wheat from chaff. *Religious* novels should be left to the same treatment as all other hypocrites.

Fiction, manifest, obvious, glaring fiction, may excite, but it cannot be the staple supply of even youthful minds; and the parents who love their children best and most wisely will be the most careful to prevent such appliances as would render the young mind frivolous on the one hand, or captivated by the unreal upon the other. A wise man once said—"There are many silver books, and a few golden books; but I have one book worth more than all, called the Bible, and that is a Book of Bank Notes." The parent who lives for his children's souls will often consider, what other books are most likely to prepare his little ones for prizing aright that Book of Books, and make that object the pole-star of his endeavours.\*

Farther: there can be no doubt, for it is fully proved by experience, that children can often relish works more advanced than parents suppose. The young mind may indeed be encumbered by elaborate lessons—like the stripling David by the armour of Goliath; but it is no less true that childish books will foster only childish minds. As true children love the society of their seniors, they often love those books best which store their young mind—which carry them onward and upward; and a wise parent, while he rejoices in this preference, will skilfully and cordially encourage it. His home will thus be at once intelligent and happy, and as his children grow in days, they will naturally and easily put away childish things.

Books have been divided into three classes. One class, the worst and lowest, is likened to poison which destroys; and all works of this character are at once to be abjured. They corrupt the mind; they make what is vicious more

\* It was Henry Martyn's practice to dismiss every book whose attractions or subject made him reluctant to lay it down and take up the Bible.

vicious still ; and the parent who tolerates them is devoid of an intelligent natural affection. But another class of books is likened to food, or what sustains and supports us. Science, art, history, discoveries, travels, poetry of a pure kind, and many other productions, enter into this class. And a third is compared to medicine which rectifies what is wrong, which furnishes an antidote—it may be to poison, to disease, or incipient death. To this section belong the Word of God, and all the books which either explain or enforce it. Now, no parent who loves his home or its inmates can hesitate regarding the books which he would encourage, according to this division. Let poison be banished. Let food be copiously supplied. Let the antidote to all evil be administered under the guidance of the Great Physician, and then there will be the melody of joy and health in the home of such a parent.

Or we may be farther helped to a right decision in this matter, by observing that a low moral tone is generally found in the young, side by side with the love of novels and romances. The youth who reads them much commonly becomes an adept in deceit—that is, he instinctively copies the heroes presented to his admiration. Precocity in sin is thus fostered, and the name of “Public Poisoners,” affixed to the authors of such productions, is seen to be too surely deserved. With such convictions founded upon such unquestionable facts, parents who would not be implicated in their children’s guilt should test every book which they peruse. Is life presented in forms opposed to the mind of God? Are attractions thrown around vice? Is contempt heaped upon goodness of the scriptural type? Then all such works should be swept from the Home where God’s truth is enthroned. Puseyism,

Popery, the unholy and impure, are often instilled into the young by such means ; and if parents would not see their children the associates of the profligate, or imitating the profane, they are called to be as watchful regarding their books as regarding their companions.

It is not easy to picture a scene more beautiful than a youthful group presided over by a Christian parent, each with a volume in hand adapted to his age or his taste. There is not merely instruction gathered, there is happiness deepened and diffused, as incident after incident circulates. But is it not like the encroachment of Satan upon Eden, when that fair picture is dashed by some production which is false in itself, and fitted to foster what is false in the young ? The result of such reading can only be a deeper dislike to the truth of God ; and children are there trained to deal with it as Jehoiakim did with the prophet's roll, when " he cut it with his knife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth."\*

## EXAMPLES.

The seductive power of a godless literature might be illustrated in many ways. It was lately testified in a Court of Justice, by a father whose family was disgraced by the conduct of his daughter, that the complicated misery of her case was " occasioned by reading the impure works of Eugene Sue and Bulwer." In other words, ruin to a soul, disgrace to a family, and death to one misguided man resulted from such reading. And the murderer of Lord William Russell confessed upon the scaffold that his cold-blooded and syste-

\* Jeremiah xxxvi. 23.



matic deed was promoted by the reading of a similar book. Some youths who have escaped from the toils of superstition, have confessed that to shun the terrible contamination that is poured into the mind by the books which they were compelled professionally to study, they were forced to descend to the cellars of their college, and there, amid the rigours of worse than winter, plod through their polluting tasks. And yet there are parents who can tolerate productions of a similar tone in the hands of their sons and their daughters!

But such influences are not confined to any circle. Wilberforce knew them by sad experience, and recorded concerning some of those works which rank the highest in their class, the *Waverley Novels*—"I am always sorry that they should have so little moral or religious object. I would rather go to render my account at the last day carrying up with me 'The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain,' than bearing the load of all these volumes, full as they are of genius." And Wilberforce had reason for that opinion. We know a man of strong and vigorous mind, who was religiously educated, and who in youth seemed to be religious himself. He removed, however, from his home to one of our mighty marts, where he sank into a degradation which ruined his health, and drove him to seek its restoration in a foreign land. The stages in his downward course, as he vividly depicted them, were—first, godless companions; then the *Waverley Novels*, which first taught him to laugh at religion; thirdly, the theatre; and fourthly, the lowest deep to which the theatre is the prelude or the threshold. Now this is but one of a thousand examples which turn homes into places of weeping, or end in the early death of the misguided young. They decline a parent's warning. In

novels, in theatres, and among the degraded and the shameless, they learn to laugh at the principles which convict them of infatuation. Like the youth just mentioned, they may indeed be rescued from the fearful pit by an Almighty arm, but like a stricken deer which leaves the herd, they must then do as he is doing now—they must wander apart, tasting often the wormwood and the gall which the memory of the past administers. And parents would do well to write sometimes, on the tender tablet of the young heart, those maxims, simple but profound—elementary, yet far-reaching, which God has given to point and to guide us to glory. “Whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil,” is one of these. Let that and similar truths be early ingrained upon the young heart, and then we say to the parent—Go pray, go hope; your bread is on the waters; you will find it after many days—in glory, if not here.

## CHAPTER XI.

## SABBATH AT HOME.

The Poetry of the Sabbath—The Fourth Commandment—"The Gates of Zion"—  
 "The Dwellings of Jacob"—Sabbath Joy—And Bondage—Self-Discipline of  
 Parents—Ministers, their Duty to "the Little Ones"—A Happy Sabbath—  
 Sabbath Schools—Their Use and Blessings—Their Abuse—Every Home a Sab-  
 bath School—Mettray and Redhill—Examples.

THIS is another of the subjects upon which poetry combines with plain, unvarnished truth to invest our homes with many attractions. "The Sabbath was made for man," and it has accordingly been hailed as "the poor man's day," on which

"With those he loves he shares the heartfelt joy  
 Of giving thanks to God, . . . .  
 And hopes . . . .  
 To reach those realms where Sabbath never ends."

No doubt, the pictures of poetry are often marred by the dark realities of life, where Sabbath is not a day of thanksgiving but of riot. Many, moreover, can admire the poetry, who do not enter into the spirit, of the Lord's day; yet, withal, it brings blessings still untold to the Home where God is feared; for the Christian Sabbath is to time what conscience is to the soul—it is both a regulator and a propelling power.

And here the first remark may refer to the extent to which the family is contemplated in the Fourth Commandment. First, the parent; then, the son; thirdly, the daughter; fourthly, the man-servant; fifthly, the maid-servant;

sixthly, even the cattle; and seventhly, the stranger sojourning in our homes, are all expressly recognised; and he who has caught the Sabbath spirit will see in all this a rich provision for happiness to man. It plants a tree of life in every home, that beneath its shadow the God-fearing inmates may meet as in Eden of old. The Sabbath thus diffuses beatitudes among all, according to their power of enjoyment, and Home is then invested with even more than its usual heavenly spirit. The Lord of that day is specially sought. The soul and all its interests are solemnly considered—and the eternal Sabbath-keeping, in an everlasting Home, is both anticipated and prepared for.

But the Supreme has drawn attention to this subject by His Providence as well as His Word. Many a mind, jaded by study, by business, or professional engrossment, carried on during seven days, instead of six each week, has first been weakened, and then become deranged—suicide has not seldom followed for want of a Sabbath. Castlereagh, Romilly, and others, are often quoted to illustrate this point, and every aspect of the holy day proclaims that no law of God can be neglected in our homes, while the transgressor escapes degradation or sorrow.

But it is not proposed to describe how the Sabbath should be sanctified. We do not write for "the gates of Zion"—the Church, but for "the dwellings of Jacob"—our Homes; and on the supposition that "The Church in the House" is not merely an ancient tradition, but an actual fact, we would try to shew how to render the Sabbath a day of rejoicing, not of gloom, and as such to be welcomed by youth as well as age. Too often has it been made a day of task-work drudgery. In many a home, the ungodliness of the

young is deepened by the compulsory nature of their employments on the Lord's day—hence it were a blessing beyond all price, if its sunshine and serenity could be diffused through our dwellings. If religion be, as some suppose, the re-uniting power in society,\* the Sabbath may well exercise a large influence in accomplishing that end; while, if it be true that in London alone 40,000 men are so employed that they have no Sabbath and scarcely a home, philanthropy must yearn to see a change for the better introduced.

Yet all improvement must be indefinitely retarded, unless parents be at pains to fit themselves for Sabbath training. That parent who employs no portion of his time in ascertaining how his children may be best instructed or impressed, has not realised his responsibility to the full: he is verifying the words of a Christian mother, who tells us, that "there is much buried in the napkin of self-indulgence, which, if called forth and traded with, might be turned to most valuable purposes for the good of their children. Be alive," she says, "to the talents committed to your care; store your memory with useful information, interesting incidents, Bible truths, and bring these forth at appropriate moments in the social circle. You will, by so doing, not only impart present gratification, but afford your children a practical lesson how to converse. The effort involves self-discipline, trouble, thought, arrangement, but the responsibility of a parent demands such exertion, and habit will make the task easy."†

Now, it is the neglect of such self-discipline, such trouble and forethought, that makes many a Sabbath worse than lost,

\* Cicero derives *Religio* from *relegere*. "Sunt dicti religiosi ex relegendo"—and *relegere* — to gather up again.

† "Hints to Christian Parents," pp. 54, 55.

and many a home akin to a prison on the Lord's day ; for if parents neglect their duty to themselves, they will not long discharge it to their children, and the Sabbath will be unhal-  
lowed while the souls both of children and of parents are put in jeopardy.

Again : it is the query of one whom long experience has made sage, whether the sermons of ministers should not be addressed to their Sabbath scholars far more than they are ;\* and whatever may be thought by some of the suggestion, there is wisdom implied in it. For might not ministers in the pulpit, far more effectually than they do, assist in rendering the Sabbath attractive to the young ? Why so rarely any reference to the lambs of the flock ? Why are they so habitually ignored amid the lessons of the sanctuary ? Why should Christian mothers be tempted, as some have been, to doubt the propriety of taking their tender charge to the house of God lest habits of listlessness should be fostered there ? "As a mother leads her children," one has said, "to the accustomed place of worship, and reminds them that they should try to listen to the good minister, and remember what he says, a doubt arises in her own mind whether or not they *can* listen and remember ; and when she marks their listlessness during the service, and feels (however *quiet* they may be) that they are restless and weary, her own enjoyment is damped by sympathy with her children, and her mind is distracted by the question, 'Is it right to rob *them* of so large a portion of their Sabbath time, by bringing them to hear instructions which they cannot receive, while their little minds might be exercised on sacred things, in the happy freedom of their own homes ?' The whispered question, 'When *will* it be done ?'

\* Rev. C. Bridges on the "Christian Ministry."

and the look of relief when it is over, awaken anxious thoughts in a mother's heart; and while she leads them homeward, painful questions stir within her as to the practical effect of their regular attendance at church."\* . . . . .

Now, surely, such danger should be all avoided, and instead of creating or strengthening a listless spirit in the young, some efforts or some ingenuity should be put forth by ministers to interest and instruct them, that the service of God may be invested with attractions, instead of being made a burden or a task. If it be the duty or the joy of a devoted teacher to interest, and, if possible, to rivet the minds of the young, ought not ministers to put forth still more assiduous endeavours to simplify their lessons for the lambs?†

\* "An Appeal to the Ministers of Christ on Behalf of the Little Ones, by a Christian Mother," p. 4.

† "How gladly would many a Christian mother plead the cause of her children with the faithful ministers of Christ! How often she longs to address such words as follow to some honoured friend and brother in the ministry:—Have you ever remarked that Jesus said to Peter, 'Feed my lambs,' *before* he said to him, 'Feed my sheep?' Did he not speak to *all* his ministers when he said to Peter, 'Feed my lambs?' And are we not to reckon among the lambs of Jesus, the babes of his own people, who have been brought to him in faith that they may receive his blessing? The admonition, '*not to despise the little ones,*' was addressed to his disciples in all ages, and his own tender care for young children is a precious feature of the example he has left us to follow. You seek, perhaps, to act in his spirit towards the young, by speaking a kind word in private, as opportunities occur; but how rare are these opportunities in the case of numbers in each congregation! Why not shew them *all* every Sabbath that you love their souls, by telling them, simply and kindly, of the love of the good Shepherd?

"Let a few sentences be spoken to the children in the course of every sermon (or at longer intervals should this be deemed too much), and many a lisping prayer will ascend for the kind minister who remembered the little ones, and often will their portion be talked over in the nursery, when the child climbs on his mother's knee, whispers something that the minister has said, and asks to hear it all again, perhaps for the twentieth time. What a precious sowing-time is lost by every minister who never thus drops the good seed into the heart of childhood!"—"Appeal," pp. 6-8.

"Again, if we may venture to judge from appearances, this power is very partially

Or farther: it has already been made plain that religion is meant to make us happy—happy according to the mind of God. To that the young have a right: their heavenly Father designed them to enjoy it; and an earthly parent may not intercept the peace of God on the way to any young heart. No doubt, sin and waywardness must be nipped, and that may occasion dispeace; but, by the blessing of God, happiness is to be aimed at; and that day which he teaches us to call “honourable,” should be specially employed so as to promote it among the young. The Scriptures, the sermon, the catechism, the hymn, the religious incident, the brief biography, the missionary’s trial or triumphs, the sorrows of sin, the joy of goodness, the love of Jesus, of the Father and the Spirit—these, and a hundred other topics, will occur to parents whom love and felt responsibility prompt to assiduity; and the Home where such things are irksome is one, we fear, where the spirit of wisdom does not reign.

This subject, however, is one which can best be explained by examples; but, before submitting any, this may be the proper place to advert to the interesting topic of Sabbath schools—a power which is now exerting a wide-spread influence upon the nation.

Were all parents alive to the importance of Home, and did they use its moral power as they are bound by God to do, Sabbath schools would cease to exist—they would no longer be required. It is, in truth, the neglect of Home, and all its hallowing influences, that has rendered Sabbath schools

felt and exercised in most congregations. A stranger, judging from the aspect of the hearers, and the style of preaching addressed to them, might suppose it settled by mutual acquiescence that a considerable number (including all the young children) *need not listen at all*; and that of those who do listen, *many need not understand*.”—“Appeal,” pp. 9, 10.



necessary. That God has honoured such institutions is beyond a question. That thousands of teachers have been there blessed and made blessings; that many of the young have had the evil heart repressed, while not a few have been savingly brought to the Redeemer, are facts not to be doubted. Missionaries to the heathen, trained amid hardness or inured to neglect, have there first felt the inspiring love of Christ and of souls, and in due time have perilled all in advancing his kingdom and glory. Now, where God has thus blessed and owned, who is he that would condemn? Nay, a teacher in a Sabbath school, devoutly and with a believer's self-denial, giving himself to the work of reclaiming the outcast and neglected, is occupying one of the most important, and, in God's eye, one of the most honourable positions which a moral agent can fill.

At the same time, we repeat, it is the neglect of home teaching, and home example, and home religion, that renders the Sabbath school needful at all. Do such institutions take care of the godly nurture of those who have few to heed or to instruct them? Do they supply the lack of home instruction, when parents are so degraded or so unfeeling as to neglect their little ones—or when the parents are no more? Then Sabbath schools are blessings. They supplement defects; they impress aright where all other impressions are adverse to the good. Employed as they may thus wisely be, they become important auxiliaries to the Christian ministry; they carry truth into quarters which the Christian ministry could never reach; they help to make the desert blossom as the rose.

But, on the other hand, do Sabbath schools supersede, or undertake to supply the place of God's institution—Home?

Do they grant a discharge, or furnish a fair excuse, to parents to neglect the means which God has appointed them to employ? Then Sabbath schools are not in their proper province. Every Christian will seek their extension, till every outcast or neglected child be brought to hear the truth and be told of the Saviour's love; for a soul or a family thus reclaimed is a new moral, or a new medicating power in its neighbourhood. That is the mission of the Sabbath school; but when it breaks up the lessons, or weakens the responsibilities, or undesignedly furnishes a cloak for the indolence of Home, it seems to have forsaken its sphere, and to be interfering with a Divine institution.

In truth, every home should be a Sabbath school; every father and every mother, a Sabbath teacher; and it is not in man's power to free a parent from that obligation. The normal state of the Christian Church would be this: to see every parent refusing to intrust his young immortals to any one who professes to love them better than he does, and sedulously seeking to guide them to the Saviour. "There was a Sabbath class taught in the parish school," writes one regarding his boyhood; "but Sabbath schools my uncles regarded as merely compensatory institutions, highly creditable to the teachers, but very discreditable indeed to the parents and relatives of the taught, and so they, of course, never thought of sending me there."\* Now, that indicates the true light in which to view the Sabbath school. It supplies the place of home when children have none, or worse, when parents are dead and in their graves, or at least, dead to their responsibility and love to souls. The parental relation is God's ordinance. The influence of Home is his honoured agency for

\* "My Schools and Schoolmasters," by Hugh Miller.

good, and to interfere with that, is to mar a Divine appointment.\*

These suggestions receive some confirmation from the plans now adopted in some countries for reforming young offenders. At Mettray, near Tours, in France, such an institution has existed for several years, and it at once proves the wisdom of its founders, and offers a tribute to the Divine institution of Home, to know that it is conducted as much as possible on the family principle. The inmates are taught and guided as if they were at home. There is a "father of the family" over every little group, and he is assisted by a "mother." There are "family prayers" and family habits—in short, all is so arranged as to take full advantage of the law of domesticity; and when that law is generally honoured, ignorance will be more speedily instructed, and vice more speedily reclaimed.†

The subject here referred to is to be settled by principles, not by authority. Yet to one great name would we appeal as helping to adjust the right position of the Sabbath school. Dr Chalmers was an earnest advocate for such institutions.

\* With all that is here said, there is still, of course, abundant room left for Christian zeal regarding Sabbath classes for adults, and whatever does not tend to supersede, or shift, or weaken parental obligation.

† The same remarks apply to the Reformatory Institution at Redhill, in England. There is hope concerning these things. The following sentences from a judicious and thoughtful book demand attention:—"May I not inquire whether it is not very possible, or rather very likely, in this day of plans and schemes, for benevolence itself, if not associated with other qualities, to frame, without doors, some things which, on the parental mind within, shall operate so far as a bounty on idleness, and as a drawback on exertion; so far take from parental obligation its appropriate awe, and from parental neglect its salutary shame; so far deprive parental improvidence of its just responsibility, and parental foresight of its fair, and rich, and delightful reward? These are at least important questions, and to me they seem to deserve the deliberate and serious consideration of not a few."—Anderson's "Domestic Constitution," pp. 207, 208, edit. of 1847. See also p. 310.

They supplied what his large heart so often longed for—the means of promoting the piety of the common people ; and his wide-ranging mind did much to extend and establish the system wherever it was needed. He was intolerant of objections against it, even though it were the weighty objection of withdrawing children from parental guardianship ; and while he lamented the want of will in many parents to attend to the religious training of their children, he based his unanswerable argument for Sabbath schools mainly upon that want. Yet while pressing his convictions, he said, “Parents, generally speaking, labour under no natural disqualification for the effective training up of their offspring in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—and why ? Just because, agreeably to all I have stated on this subject, every one of them may, if he will, have access to the Bible ; every one of them may, if he will, have access to the Mediator, through whom the things of God may, through the medium of the Bible, be revealed to the understanding ; every one of them may, if he will, have the benefit of the teaching of the Holy Ghost, and through prayer for wisdom as he stands in need of it, may obtain a plentiful supply of that wisdom, in virtue of which he may win the souls of his family. With all this in my mind, I can have no doubt as to the general competency of parents for the Christian charge of their families ; nor do I think that the land in which we dwell will ever become a land of righteousness, till many a parent shall have reared in his own home the altar of piety, and shall have set up a school of instruction under the sanctuary of his own roof, and within the retirement of his own walls.” . . . . .

## EXAMPLES.

To illustrate the important subject of Sabbath at Home, we submit the following account by a Mother in Israel who loves souls and has learned to live for them. Too long has the training of children been pushed into a corner of Home, or treated as of minor importance; but the following narrative describes an abode where the souls of the children, their salvation, and their happiness regulate, as they should do, the Sabbath doings of all.

In describing our little plans for Sabbath, a Narrative before us says, I have to begin with Saturday, having learned by experience that the comfort of the Sabbath depends very much on the arrangements made for the preceding day. It seems to me very important that parents should endeavour to wind up their affairs for the week as much as possible on Friday, and so leave themselves at leisure on Saturday to share the pursuits and enjoy the company of their children. No one need fear that in doing so, he is giving up one of the six days of work required by Divine authority, for the work of cultivating his children's affections, and controlling and guiding their amusements is a most important and difficult branch of parental duty, on which mainly depends his power of training them for God. There is a sweet and precious feeling always to be found in *very* young children, which makes them crave a parent's sympathy in all their little interests, and find every pleasure enhanced by a parent's presence and smile. Now, we should never allow this feeling to pine and die for want of encouragement. We *must* have free and constant access to their hearts, in order to have the power of conversing with them on Divine things, and nothing tends

more to keep up freedom of intercourse with them on their highest interests, than giving them free access to us in regard to those little concerns and pleasures which, though trifles in our eyes, are of great moment in theirs.

I have been led for some years to tell my little ones (this Mother continues), that Saturday should be a *sociable* day, spent in doing or enjoying things together—feeling thankful to God for all our comforts, and trying to give pleasure to each other; and we always pray together on Saturday morning, that we may so spend the day as to be prepared to keep the Sabbath holy.

One advantage of having Saturday pleasures which the parent directs and shares, is that he finds it easy to guard his children from over-excitement, which often leaves both mind and body unfitted for the sacred duties of the Lord's day. For a long time, we kept strictly to the rule of having no company on Saturday, and declining all Saturday invitations both for ourselves and our children; but of late we have felt it a duty occasionally to share the enjoyments of our family circle with some of those who live at a distance from their own homes, and are closely engaged on every day but Saturday. . . . My own conviction is very strong, that visiting on Saturday evening is better avoided if possible, from the very great difficulty of regulating it so as not to dissipate the minds of the young, or cause fatigue and hurry to servants.

The plan which I have often seen recommended, of putting away week-day things, and making arrangements for Sabbath on Saturday evening, is one which we have long practised, and found to be most useful. I have always tried to accustom my nurse and little ones to collect their tools and noisy playthings, and put them aside, but have

never felt myself warranted to deprive my *little* children of every kind of plaything on Sabbath. Amusement, in some form or other, seems to me as necessary to their comfort and wellbeing as sleep and food, and I could never teach them Watts' well-known line—

“I must neither work nor play”—

for they are too young to work, and I cannot see that God forbids *them* to play. His blessed command is addressed to those who can work six days in the week, and that class alone are commanded to rest on the seventh. Those who are incapable of work are incapable of ceasing from work, and it is a fallacy to forbid as work on Sabbath what we never pretend to regard as work on any other day.

Yet children may at a very early age obey that portion of the commandment which requires us to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy—and I have always tried to engage them in sacred duties as long and as often as I could, avoiding on the one hand, the danger of making holy things a task—and on the other, of allowing them to play or trifle while apparently engaged in sacred duties. Intervals spent in recreation seem to me indispensable as a means of fitting them for hearty, earnest attention during the portions of time reserved for holy things. I required from the first that all Sabbath recreations should be *quiet*, telling them that grown-up people were able to spend the whole Sabbath in reading the Bible, praying, and thinking about God, and therefore little children must take care not to hinder or annoy, by their noise, those who were so employed.

I also endeavoured, the Narrative proceeds, to increase the privileges and pleasures of Sabbath by keeping the newest toys locked up during the week, and laying them out for

Sabbath on Saturday evening. The children have had dissected pictures from Bible-scenes; a large letter-box has afforded them the means of putting up short texts . . . . . and I have felt much encouraged by remarking that as they grow older, they choose and invent employments for themselves suited to the Sabbath. For instance, one of them having learned the ten commandments, began, of his own accord, to write them in a book during his spare time on Sabbath . . . . . Their drawings on the sacred day are generally attempts at diagrams representing missionary scenes, or portions of Bible history . . . . . It has been a comfort to me that the children have always shewn a strong sense of the sin of Sabbath amusements for grown-up people. Sabbath boatings and excursions, which we have sometimes witnessed from our windows, seemed to shock them as much as ourselves.

Farther : I find that it requires some watchfulness and exertion to prevent the household from sitting late on Saturday night, and rising late on Sabbath morning—and I am thoroughly convinced that both habits are unfavourable to the right observance of the Sabbath.

When my boys come to me for their morning texts and prayers, the Sabbath is always specially remembered. They first pray in their own words, and then I pray with them, and such petitions as the following are always offered—“Lord, help us to keep the Sabbath day;” “Make me very earnest and attentive in church;” “Help the good ministers to convert many people.”

We were led, some time ago, to adopt a plan for family worship, which is, I think, really useful to the children. In the morning, when the little ones are always present, we read only the narrative parts of Scripture, and I go over with



them on the previous evening the passage to be read next morning. While they were very young, I used to tell them the substance of it in my own words: now, I read the portion, answer their little questions about it, and point out anything I wish them to remark. Then the same passage is read at the morning family worship, and questions are asked which the children are generally ready to answer. I believe this to be a means of making our worship less formal and more interesting to the grown-up persons present, while it affords an opportunity for short, simple remarks, which, though addressed to the children, may convey instruction to others without risk of offence.

Some years ago, we tried various methods for promoting religious conversation at breakfast on Sabbath morning. Each prepared a question to be answered from the Bible, or the youngest present was allowed to put a question to each of the others on Bible-history. We found, however, that these little arrangements soon grew burdensome to some of our party, and we have long given them up, leaving conversation unrestrained, but praying that it may be kept suitable to the Sabbath, and trying to make it so. Questions, and repeating texts at meals, are good plans if they be heartily entered into by all; but if even one shew dislike or indifference, they cease to be the means of promoting natural conversation, and rather put the party out of tune.

Farther: To be on the outlook during the week for interesting things to talk of on the Sabbath is strongly recommended by Abbot, and I have always agreed with him, though I do not think we have ever brought it into practice as fully as we ought. . . . . But if the father of a family take an interest in missions and other plans for doing good, and if

the members, according to their age and ability, are accustomed to follow out some plan of usefulness, and to take an interest in good works, there will be no lack of subjects suited for Sabbath conversation. And this is one of the many ways in which the Lord pays again those who give freely to Him, some portion of their substance and their time.

Breakfast over, the children see their father in succession in the library, beginning with the youngest. We keep a daily record of their general conduct and their diligence at lessons and in work, and this is shewn to him every Sabbath morning, when he talks and prays with each. Nothing seems to me of greater value in parental dealing with children, than to keep up the constant practice of meeting them *alone*. I have always made a point of seeing my little ones separately for their daily morning texts and prayers; and both of us have kept up for years the plan of seeing the elder children alone on Sabbath. A parent may at times feel pained at the want of confidence and openness in his children, which renders the regular meeting rather a trial than a pleasure. But if estrangement and reserve exist, it is desirable they should be fully felt, that the parent may try to discover the cause and seek its removal. On the other hand, when the child is disposed to lay open his heart to the parent, this regular opportunity is most precious to both; and if none were provided, a timid, feeling child might not have courage to seek it of his own accord.

I was confirmed in my own view on this point, and also in regard to social companionship with children, by hearing of a large family who all seemed to be growing up for God, and the two following points in the mother's practice appear to have been blessed as the means. First, she had made a re-

gular practice of seeing her children separately on Sabbath, and had found it possible to do so, under the difficulties of increasing numbers and differences of age. Secondly, she had inflexibly reserved some portions of each day for having her children around her, and spending with them a time of social enjoyment. This also was difficult, but she persevered, and never suffered visitors or other claims to set aside what she regarded as a prior engagement with her children. "The time with Mamma," both on the Sabbath and on week-days, was a privilege highly prized by all the children; and whatever personal effort or sacrifice was needed to secure it, was more than repaid to the mother by the confidence and love of her young flock, and by their walking with her in the ways of pleasantness and peace.

We have five missionary boxes in the house, (this Account says farther,) and also some missionary maps, pictures, and curiosities. . . . We began about five years ago with one box for India, and the rest have since been added by desire of the children, as new objects of interest were presented to their minds. The earnestness displayed by them in our little missionary plans is sometimes very encouraging. After briefly asking the Divine blessing, we begin by putting into the boxes, the money set apart for this purpose on the preceding evening; and then each of the children receives and puts into his charity purse, the little sum he had earned during the previous week, by good marks, by doing some useful work, or by some little act of self-denial. I then read some portions selected from our little monthly magazines, or anything likely to awaken interest in the Lord's work, or quicken and direct their wish to do good. We were led to begin this little meeting by a request that we would help the

Madras mission with our prayers, and when other missionary or benevolent objects have been brought before us, the children have often said, "We should pray for this." A list of twelve objects has thus been gradually made, which we take in succession to talk about at our little meeting.

Sometimes the children have a great deal that they are eager to say. At other times I have to remind them of what they have heard, or call it forth by questions. But in thus talking about the little they know, it is kept fresh in their minds, while they are helped by the missionary map, and by glancing at the dark condition of the world there. They then each choose one or two things to pray for, and help me to reckon up the subjects to be left for me; each next offers a short prayer in his own simple words, which is followed by mine, and I try to make it as simple as theirs, and to touch as concisely on the different subjects. . . . . I think it is about two years since we began this plan, and I have fairly tried and found it a good one. . . . .

This narrative of a busy Sabbath-day next touches on public worship, and describes the difficulty felt by some mothers in taking their little ones to church at all, where the sermons and services are often but little adapted to meet the minds or stir the hearts of children. This earnest Mother then refers to her own endeavours with her children, on the afternoon of the Sabbath-day, and says, My object at this time is to increase their knowledge of the Bible, and especially to remind them of their baptism, its meaning and obligations. I have written some short papers on this subject, which are often read, and we go over a brief summary of the blessings and duties signified in baptism, and converse and pray together.—We have always made a point of having

no lessons on Sabbath—no learning by rote. If our children repeat anything, it has been prepared during the week, and merely revised for Sabbath.

The next point adverted to is "The Church in the Nursery," where hymns are sung, and the Scriptures read, and then the employments of this Home, after dinner, are thus described: Each tells a story, from the oldest to the youngest;—a very useful and happy custom. A hymn is sung, texts which had been learned during the week, are repeated now. The younger members soon after this retire; the more advanced read their notes of the sermons which they have heard; and, later in the evening, we assemble with the servants for family reading. A written question is given to each of the elder children and the servants. These questions are answered in writing on the following Sabbath, and the answers, after being examined, are returned in private with such remarks as seem to be required. Four or five verses of the Bible are next repeated, and a portion of the Shorter Catechism is said by the elder children. The head of the household then reads a portion of Scripture, with notes and extracts previously prepared, and also anything likely to interest and instruct which has occurred in his reading during the week. Maps and diagrams are often shewn to illustrate the reading. These evening duties, which begin and end with prayer, generally last for an hour and a-half, or from half-past seven till nine, when the *social* exercises close.

And such is an account of the plans adopted in *one* household to hallow the Sabbath-day, and make it bear upon preparedness for eternity alike in young and old. Those who are not accustomed to pay much attention to their

children's souls, may wonder at the variety of engagements which these plans betoken. Some even of the wise, the good, and the soul-loving may have other plans ~~which~~ they prefer and pursue, but here is a Home where all the ~~proceed-~~ings of the Sabbath are studiously adapted to promote the godly upbringing of the young, to render religion attractive, yet mix it up with all that is said and done. The ungodly would find such doings irksome, just as heaven itself would be no heaven to them. But is salvation the one thing needful? Is the love of souls ascendant in a parent's bosom? Is it felt to be really the business of this life to prepare for the next? Is the Bible true, and are its maxims binding? Finally, is the Lord of the Sabbath our joy and rejoicing? Then such methods as have been here described will be hailed as means which that Lord may bless to train up children in the way in which they ought to go.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE HOMES OF THE RICH AND THE POOR.

I.—The Homes of the Rich—The Ungodly—And their Ruin—Pleasant Places—An Example.—II.—The Homes of the Poor—The Dissolute—The Devout—The Trials of the Poor—Manufactories—The Interlinkings of Society—Examples—A Galaxy.

It is a truism to observe that it is not what we *possess*, but what we *are* that decides our character. Judged by that maxim, the first in the world's esteem would often be last—the last would often be first ; and as some of the suggestions already offered may not seem to bear upon all classes, we may here glance at the Homes of the rich and the poor in the light of Scripture, in some of their distinctive characteristics.

## I.—THE HOMES OF THE RICH.

It is a melancholy sight to see God utterly forgotten in the Homes where he has shed down the affluence of his bounty. On the right hand and on the left, his blessings in providence are strewed, but never once is the knee bent to implore his guidance, or praise him for his goodness ; the families who dwell there “call not on the name of the Lord.” Children grow up without being won by a parent's religion ; and the good impressions which may be received from others, the parent's example often speedily effaces. Amid the insipidities which fashion exalts to the rank of virtues, the soul is entombed. The more God bestows, the more he is

neglected. Men enjoy so many of his gifts that, in practice, they can dispense with himself, and they pass on to his tribunal amid frivolities which need scarcely arrest the attention even of the winged insect of an hour. Such homes are like a galley richly freighted, but sailing amid rocks, and quicksands, and coral reefs. One book could be their chart, their God's—but that book is unheeded, and they sink.

It is pleasant, however, to turn from such a scene to contemplate those abodes of affluence which are also the homes of piety, or sanctuaries in which God is honoured. "The Church in the house" assembles there from day to day. Parents there seek by prayer and painstaking to advance the highest interests of their little ones, and some, whose social position gives them rank at the right hand of royalty, thus evince an earnestness in their love of truth which becomes them better than coronet or star. Their simple faith and lowly goodness not seldom make their piety as rich and as captivating as the trees of the tropics. The vortex of fashion compels such decided souls to grasp the truth in the hand of a very simple faith. They must either do so, or be sucked from the rock by the surge: but by grace they grasp that truth and are safe. Children, servants, all within their gates, are cared for, and the beauties of such holiness are far more attractive than all that affluence or titles can pile upon men. What believer, with the Bible in his hand, will think of Lord Collingwood's victories when his piety is depicted? or of Lord Nelson's achievements, brilliant as they were, when seen behind the dark shadows of his ignoble private life?

In the princely palace at B——, one wanders from hall to hall, and from corridor to corridor, admiring, or sometimes



even awed by what he sees. Literature finds a stately sanctuary there. Art embellishes long suites of apartments. Science is largely represented. Taste walks hand in hand with affluence. From cupola to threshold all is princely, and the visitant cannot help glancing, perhaps, from the windows of that magnificent abode to the far-off cottage, scarcely perceptible from the vastness of park and lawn, and marvelling at the contrasted homesteads of the co-equal sons of mortality, the labourer and the lord.

But he is led to that portion of the pile which is set apart for the worship of God—the Chapel of the Palace—and what meets him there? All is confusion—tasteless, tawdry, and offensive. Paltry pictures, displaced from more prominent positions, disfigure the walls of God's portion of that Home. They are incongruous as well as tasteless; and when the eye of a worshipper rests upon them, they must suggest ideas antagonistic to reverence towards God. Now, all that is just an embodied representation of what often takes place in the homes of the rich, and what the final result must be Rutherford may tell. "The wound of a wounded spirit" "impairerth the health, drieth up the blood, wasteth away the marrow, pineth away the flesh, consumeth away the bones, maketh pleasure painful, and shorteneth life: no wisdom can counsel it, no counsel can advise it, no advice can persuade it, no assuagement can cure it, no power can overcome it, no sceptic can affray it, no enchanter can charm it;" and all that sad experience awaits those who subordinate God to self—who glorify man in stately halls, and God in a dust-laden corner.

#### II.—THE HOMES OF THE POOR.

"The common people heard Jesus gladly." Though a life

of holiness possesses many attractions when it is led by the influential or the accomplished, it is among the sons and the daughters of toil that we commonly find godliness in greatest vigour. Many of them are, no doubt, the victims of debasing habits, and we cannot look upon some of their homes, their little ones, or themselves, without seeing mournful proofs of that truth. Home laws are violated, and home rights set at naught. A bleak soul within scowls upon a bleak world without, and all is wretchedness there. But, on the other hand, where godliness exists, it rectifies such disorders. It sheds light upon dark homes. It tames wild children. It curbs the outbreak of passion. It may restore even bodily health; and those who have visited the homes where such godliness dwells, have felt that it was good for them to be there, to see the humble but saintly children of labour "far more illumined, and with nobler truths," than the doating devotees of mere earthly science or mere material wealth. In such homes, amid poverty, perhaps, and toil, and not seldom sickness, we learn more and more to admire the domestic constitution. We see what blessings it can diffuse when the will of God is paramount, and the simple annals of such abodes proclaim at once the power of grace, the blessedness of the righteous, and what it is that constitutes the felicity of Home. He saw far into many things who said, that without intercourse with his poorer neighbours in affliction, there is no spiritual health or full happiness for man.\*

But we can scarcely glance at the homes of the poor without being reminded of the peculiar trials which abound in them, and the peculiar sympathy which is due to their inmates. The children are often doomed to premature toil,

\* Dr Arnold.

and leave their homes before correct principle is taught, far less confirmed. Often from early dawn till evening twilight, or later still, are parents and children separated. Some crowded manufactory is then their day-long home, and there all that should be cherished is often overlaid.

"Men, maidens, youths,  
Mothers and little children, boys and girls,  
Enter, and each the wonted task resumes  
Within this temple, where is offered up  
To gain, the master idol of the realm,  
Perpetual sacrifice."

Now, philanthropy looks round in vain for a remedy for such moral evils. The grasp of cupidity refuses to be relaxed, and homes deserted, parents and children toiling to the uttermost, must continue to abound. But what philanthropy cannot achieve, religion can ; and it furnishes an antidote to much of the evil, when it shews to the poor or the toil-worn a Saviour once like themselves. So attractive is he in his love, so genial in his sympathy, so perfectly human in his lowliness, yet so mysteriously divine, that men may rejoice even in poverty when it supplies one tie more between Jesus and the soul. A Home may be very humble, and the fare of its inmates may be frugal or coarse. But he who said so wisely, "An altar of earth shall you make to your God," and not a gaudy or a gorgeous pile, never despises the worship of such a Home when it is the heart that adores. When such a blameless pair as those mentioned by Luke,\* "both righteous, before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord," occupy a Home, he takes up his abode there—his peace rests upon that house. There may

\* Chap. i. 6.

be no such scenes as the romance of poetry sketches, when it speaks of the dwellings of the poor, and asks—

“Are they not lowly cottages,  
 With moss and flowers o’ergrown,  
 And little gardens circling them  
 Like an enchanted zone ?  
 Do not sweet blossoms incense breathe  
 Into the very door,  
 And early roses gaily wreath  
 The tiny casements o’er ?”

Nay, far different sights may meet us ; but even then, if God be feared, these homes are temples—man adores and is blessed.

Again—and just one view more. By a wise and kindly law, God has interlinked the different classes of society so closely together that no one need affect independence : it is a dream. The rich need the poor to labour for them, and the poor need the rich for support : the sick need the healthy to tend them, and the healthy need the sick to teach them how to suffer and to die. Society, through all its sections, is thus interdependent, and men are equally blessed in their homes, whether it be a castle or a hut that they occupy, if they dedicate it to God, and make it a Bethel. Home then becomes a focus of gladness—but only then ; and as streams flow down from the mountains to fertilise the valleys, wholesome influences descend from the higher to the lower in life, when God is the guide of each. “The gentle glories and the sweet endearments of his own fireside” then become a solace and a strength alike to the rich and the poor.

#### EXAMPLES.

The effects produced upon mind by different localities must largely mould man’s nature. He who is reared in an

Indian jungle will not think, or feel, or act, just like a native of the Val d'Arno. A dweller in that "valley of weeping," Glencoe, cannot have exactly the same likings as a native of Kent. A man who never travelled out of sight of the stern glories of Chamouni can scarcely judge of things like an occupant of the Campagna Felice.

Our Homes thus mould our minds. Yet genius, greatness, goodness, are not geographical things, and are entailed upon no order. Daniel Defoe was once a hosier, yet he wrote "Robinson Crusoe," a work which perhaps ranks second only to the "Pilgrim's Progress," in the number whom it has charmed. John Bunyan, that king of men, was a tinker. Isaac Walton was a linen-draper. Shakspeare was a yeoman's son. Bloomfield was a shoemaker, and Burns a ploughman. Cobbet was first a farmer's boy, and then a common soldier. Ferguson, the astronomer, was a herd-boy. Ben Jonson was a bricklayer. Captain Cook was the son of an untaught peasant. The elder Herschell was a musician in a German regiment. Richard Arkright began life as a barber, and Chantrey as a milk-boy. Sir Thomas Lawrence was the son of an innkeeper. The first Sir Robert Peel began as a workman, and ended as a merchant prince. The first missionaries to India were sneered at, by heartless wits, as deserters from the last and the loom. Harlan Page was a carpenter, and John Pounds a cobbler—but why proceed? The galaxy of bright names which have emerged from humble homes tell that there as elsewhere, God-sent men are found; and while all this displays how equally God's gifts are distributed, it warns us to keep the fountains clear, that the streams may be copious and pure. Even though the homes of the poor may rarely send forth such

men as have been named, they are every day sending forth into society myriads upon whom, as workmen and servants, our welfare, our domestic comfort, or even our safety depends ; and if that be true, how important is it to leaven all such homes by the sweet influences of heavenly truth ! When we have learned to love, in some degree, as the Saviour did, one of the deepest yearnings of the soul is to see his Word enthroned alike in the palace and the hut. That is the salt which preserves from corruption—that is the light which illuminés amid darkness—that is the wisdom which guides amid abounding snares—and that is the grand amalgam for binding rich and poor together in the bonds of a common brotherhood. The poor man's home becomes a palace of the Great King, if his truth be enthroned. The palace of a prince is only a tomb for the living, if that truth be ignored.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE WIDOW'S HOME.

The Mourner's Book—The Widow's God—Aspects of Widowhood—Consolations—  
The Bible—The Loss of a Husband—The Saving of a Soul—Beauty for Ashes  
—Examples—In Scripture—Mrs General —.

It is beautiful to notice how much of the Bible bears on the condition of the widow. God's book is pre-eminently the book of mourners. It is written for them, it can be best prized by them, and is thoroughly adapted to the "afflicted and the poor people," of whom she is the chief. He who is full of pity undertakes to be especially the widow's God, and the words addressed to the bereaved church are not less adapted to the bereaved Christian wife—"Thy Maker is thy husband."

And she needs it all; for of all the homes of sorrow, hers is often the most desolate. The cold, and rified, and joyless abode—the measureless blank, the lacerated feelings, the crushed heart, the lowering future—all tell her what it is to have the delight of her eyes taken away with a stroke, and to be left alone in a cold, inhospitable world.

First, the widow is perhaps plunged into poverty by the blow. Her living husband brought affluence, or a competency to her—but all has perished with him, and now dependence has become her lot, and added to her other wasting griefs.

Or next, the widow must stint, and strain, and toil, and still have but a pittance.

“The heart of love that made her home an ever sunny place,”

is cold in the grave, and most of her joys are beside it. Through tears, she sees around her the little ones, now orphans, to whom she must be both a father and a mother. The labours of the night, added to those of the day, are often not enough to secure their daily bread; and the pains and privations which she has thus to endure without ceasing, rival in their bitterness the pang which made her what she is. At the sight of them, her heart may sink within her; in some cases, reason has given way; and though the God of the widow and the fatherless *will* shield, her lot is dark and crushing.

Or, again, the widow is feeble and delicate. She was screened from all that could injure or grieve her by him whom death has snatched away. But now she has to battle with the world, weak, weary, and alone. The nature that was fashioned to lean has now nothing earthly on which to rely—like the vine when torn from its elm, she sinks to the earth, and sometimes feels as if it would be well if she could die. The sad condition of what Henry calls “a beheaded house” is realised in all its grief. It seems the bitterness of death repeated.

Or, next, the widow may sorrow for another cause. She and he who is now in the narrow house, may often have rejoiced together in fellowship as saints. The tie which unites husband to wife, and wife to husband, may have been both consecrated and made stronger by the bond which knit them, not merely as creatures, but as Christians. But now all that is over; it is extinguished by death; and the hour of prayer or the Sabbath devotion, which often brought deep joy to



both, is transformed into a source of sorrow by the sad memories which it awakens—the unutterable blank which it discloses. Her strength melts into tears, and her soul is bowed to the dust, while she drains the bitterest dregs of a cup filled to the brim with sorrow.

Or, farther, perhaps that widow, a Christian herself, sits in sackcloth and ashes, unable to weep for anguish when she thinks of the manner of her husband's death. He had not lived as a believer in Jesus : man, not God, was his fear : earth, not heaven, was the centre of his hopes, or the goal of his aspirations ; and he died and gave no sign. Regarding eternity, all is consequently dark. She dare not look forward. She can only be silent, for her God has done it all ; or, if she speaks, it is to pour out her heartfelt before Him.

Such are some glimpses of the widow's lot. But is she a believer in Jesus ? Does she know the way to the throne occupied now by him who was once “the Man of sorrows ?” Or is the Comforter whom he promised sought and honoured by her ? Then consolation may abound ; and it is thus that he administers it—

“The stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow which are within thy gates shall come, and shall eat, and be satisfied, that the Lord thy God may bless thee.” : . . . .

— “A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.”

— “Leave thy fatherless children ; I will preserve them alive ; and let thy widows trust in Me.”

— “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.”

By assurances so tender, the God of the desolate pours balm

into the wounded spirit, and "causes the widow's heart to sing for joy."—He thus soothes her aching soul, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is now beheld as peculiarly the God of the widow—tending, soothing, and upholding her on her journey home.

And moreover, in cases not a few, the loss of a husband has been the occasion of saving the soul. Till that desolating bereavement befell, there was no earnest thought devoted to hereafter. Leaning on a broken reed, centring affection on the creature, and seeking rest upon a heaving wave, the eternal realities seemed far-off, shadowy things. But when the sad truth of the creature's insufficiency was flashed upon the soul by the resistless stroke of death, or when the world was seen through the medium of tears and a rifled home, the need of a better hope was felt; heaven began to seem bright, when earth was wrapt in gloom.

The time may accordingly arrive when even such desolate homes become the abodes of peace. There is beauty given for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning. God is chosen there, and He can "supply all our wants." The poor fleeting creature is regarded as the creature should ever be. It is seen that the true happiness of life lies in the favour of God, and seeking it there, the widowed heart learns to rejoice indeed. Like him who said of old, "I should have perished, had I not perished"—that is, my soul would have been ruined had my earthly hopes not been blighted—such widows can say, My soul would have been lost had death not snatched from my home him who was my stay—nay, alas! my very God. And now

"That grief-stricken heart, weaned from the world,  
Clings closer to the Cross, and thence derives  
Its sweetest comfort, and its fixed support."

It is thus that grace transmutes loss into gain. It turns our sighs into prayers, and out of the tomb brings a better than mortal life—as from the grave of Christ, life and immortality dawned upon man. A more genial influence is now diffused through the widow's abode, and though it may often be sad, it need never be gloomy; nay, the Sun of Righteousness may shine especially there.

And need we tell how unavailing all mortal consolations, in such cases, are? We have seen a widow clothed in the garments of her fresh sorrow, hastening to a theatre for solace; but was it likely she would find it? And when Philip the Handsome of Austria died, Juana, his widow, had his body magnificently attired and laid upon a bed of state. She was actuated by the hope that her husband would revive, and watched and waited long for his restoration to life. Such was the delirious consolation to which that widow clung; and was it wonderful that when Philip was carried at last to the grave, that woman's heart was left in the loneliness of despair? When she made a creature her stay in spite of death, what could remain but woe?

#### EXAMPLES.

The Scriptures abound in examples both of the good done by widows, and of the guardianship exercised over them by Him who is love. Whether a prophet was to be saved from starvation, or a model giver furnished to the Church—whether we were to be taught to weep with those who weep, or to witness some of the most touching sights even in the Saviour's history, it is to the home of the widowed that we are pointed; some of them shine there, and will shine as the stars for ever and ever. But let us turn to a recent example.

General ——— was an infidel of a very resolute type, and he died as he had lived, firm, obstinate, and proud. Soon after his death, his widow was taken ill of a disease which left but little hope that her life would be prolonged. Those who loved her soul, and who spoke to her regarding her eternal future, were repelled by the assurance that her husband and she had held the same opinions, and “she never could wish to go to a better place than where he was.” She accordingly refused to pray. She firmly and boldly rejected the Bible; and though the hand of death was very visibly upon her, she parried every attempt to lead her to the only spot of safety—the Cross.

But one of the most firm hearts that ever animated an accomplished woman, at length in some degree gave way. A tear first, then prayer, then inquiry, then the Bible for the first time examined with care, were stages in her progress; and then she was overheard exclaiming, “O my God! O my distracted soul! God pity my weakness! Mercy, O Lord! mercy on me, and heal my blindness, if I am in error.” All the while, however, “the deathlike aversion of her soul to Christ” continued unremoved. She could weep over the New Testament now, but she could not welcome its Saviour. The Bible’s account of sin at length drew from her the cry, “O my God! is there no hope? God be merciful to me a sinner!” and then the tender exhibition of the Gospel—“The Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world”—at last carried her heart. She confessed all. She had sinned against conscience, against early instructions, against the Spirit of God—and now she is not far from His kingdom; the cry, “Can the Bible lead me to a cure for a broken heart? Is it Jesus Christ?” was the first gleam of its

reflected light. She felt the "overwhelming guilt of her soul," and that drove her to the Refuge. "Oh may I venture!" was her earnest inquiry. "O my God! and are these promises, are these offers made to such as me?" was language which shewed that she was feeling her way to the resting-place; and the words, "O my Redeemer! I take thee as my Saviour—now, wholly, only, and for ever"—indicated that this wandering dove had found the ark—this widowed one the Husband of the soul. "The Lord God of truth had redeemed *her*" by her own confession—and thus what began in widowhood and a broken heart, led to the exceeding weight of glory. Nature had once prompted the repelling cry—

"Away! to me—a woman—bring

Sweet waters from affection's spring;"

but grace now taught her with joy to draw water from the wells of salvation. The grief which had corroded her heart was turned into songs. The wanderer, in one case more, has come to himself, and there is joy on high over another penitent soul.

And it is often thus. God leads the blind by a way which they do not know; and whether it be to win us to Christ at first, or to make His people more like him, widowhood and orphanage become the lot awarded to many by Him who is LOVE.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE HOME OF THE SINGLE.

Romans xvi.—Centres of Influence—Scenes of Female Effort—How are Unmarried Females often so Useful?—The Secret of their Strength—And of their Happiness—Effects—Tact—Happiness—Examples.

ONE of the most peculiar Chapters in the Bible is the last to the Romans. The insight which it gives into early Christian life—the light which it sheds, in glimpses at least, upon the home-scenes of the first Christians—the depth of affection which it displays—the unity of aim, of action, and of spirit which it manifests, and the prominence which it gives to female activity and zeal, all combine to render that portion of Scripture one of the fairest sights where all are green and goodly. He who would understand the spirit of apostolic life should often study it with care.

It gives prominence, we say, to female exertion for Christ, and as there are many Homes where the single reside, and devote themselves to His cause, it may be well to glance for a moment at such abodes.

They may be centres of influence for good such as only the religion of Jesus can produce, and it is not too much to say that from those homes where the Spirit of wisdom dwells, there emanates much of what is fitted to soothe man's sorrows, to restore happiness to the wretched, and promote Christ's glory upon earth. Single women often have a mission of mercy such as is not entrusted to those who have the cares

of a home to carry, or the duties of a home to discharge. It may be among relatives—it may be in the homes of the poor or the diseased—it may be in the prison, to clothe, and teach, and pray for—or the workhouse, to cheer—or the schoolhouse, to instruct—or by the deathbed, to point to life everlasting. But wherever it is, in all the varied scenes of sorrow or of toil, an unmarried woman, if the Spirit of God be her teacher, has such means and such power of doing good as God has entrusted to no other class.

Nor is this wonderful. The unmarried, if they be also the Spirit-taught, can leisurely cultivate the graces of the divine life, can, without distracting cares, give themselves calmly to work the work of God; and hence there is probably not a minister, if he be zealously watching for souls, who would not confess how much he is indebted to the aid of this class. Rising by grace above all that is deemed irksome or isolating in their solitary position, they often learn to spend and be spent in the work of doing good. Phœbe, “the servant of the Church,” and “the succourer of the Church and of Paul;” “Mary, who bestowed much labour” on the apostles; Tryphena and Tryphosa, with others who will be held in everlasting remembrance, have still their sisters and successors in the churches; and if sometimes a feeling of loneliness or insulation do creep over them, it is dispelled, we believe, or it may even be turned into gladness, by a more intense devotedness to the service and the glory of our Lord. He is with us always. There need, therefore, be no loneliness—at least, the lonely are as safely guarded as the prophet was by his chariots and horsemen of fire. Thus kept in safety, communion with God becomes the secret at once of their happiness and their efforts.

No need, then, for such devoted souls to flee to nunneries for peace—they find it in the full, free service of their God. In feeding the hungry, in clothing the naked, in drawing out the soul to the poor, they have enough to make the heart and the home perennially happy. The tear of misery dried, the wanderer reclaimed, the fallen raised up, may surely impart a joy with which the world cannot intermeddle; and while the frivolous flutter life away in the pursuit of shadows, delusions, follies, sin, those whom we now describe are walking in the footsteps of Him who went about doing good. With Dorcas, they make garments for the poor; with Priscilla, they are helping forward the cause of truth in its death-strife with all that is false, and when God gives the means, they are as ready to distribute as to sympathise. Some of them at least know, that an idle day is worse than lost—it will meet us at the judgment demanding why we lost it; and under that conviction they do good—it may be by stealth, yet resolutely. “Fearful of fame, unwilling to be known,” they shrink from public notice, yet are they unwearied in their work of faith. Some are even self-sacrificing in that cause, and, rising above “self, that narrow, miserable sphere,” welcoming the work which their Lord has in his holy providence allotted, they try to cheat pain of its groans and grief of its tears, and by a blessing from on high, they often succeed. In a word, we look in vain for more devoted servants of Christ than may often be found in the homes of unmarried females.

And the tact of such workwomen is often not less remarkable than their zeal. There are no doubt silly women who yield to mere emotion and deem it principle—who give so unwisely, that their gifts are bounties on deception, or idleness, or vice. As there are some whose very charity



savours of insult, or whose compassion is like smoke to the eyes or nitre to a wound, there are also some so lavish and unwise as to promote the very evils which they try to cure. But in other cases, a skill in detecting and a firmness in resisting imposture; as well as a tenderness in aiding, are acquired by experience, which lend a moral weight to all other actions. The family just sinking silently into want is helped with a delicacy which saves every feeling. The gentlewoman in decay is treated as a companion and a friend in the act of being relieved. The pale and dying mother is aided in a manner so feminine and kindly, that no poignancy is added to the coming pang of separation. And these are truly Christian sights—they help to reconcile us in some degree to sorrow, or if we still weep, the tears of gratitude are mingled with those of grief.

‘When we are wretched, where can we complain?  
And when the world looks cold and surly on us,  
Where can we go to meet a warmer eye  
With such sure confidence . . . ?”

Now, in all this we are just telling how happy are the hearts and the homes of those single women who are thus employed. The position which they occupy, and the work which they do, approximate closely to the character of the redeemed, or the “zealous of good works;”\* while by the grace of God, they are brought within the sweep of the beatitude, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” They correspond to the standard of the King and Judge, who says, “I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”†

\* Titus ii. 14.

† Matt. xxv. 35, 36.

## EXAMPLES.

It is not necessary to quote examples here. We have seen them in the New Testament. We find them in the companions of Mrs Fry in Newgate. We meet with them in prison committees throughout Europe. In the darkest lane, in the poorest cellar or most aerial garret, such examples are found. We have seen such a devotee to good-doing brave the horrors of an infidel's death-bed, in an offensive den, and leave the wretched man only to pray for him, when he could no longer hear the words, "Come unto me." Such scenes rebuke the shallow men who would persuade us that the power of our religion is exhausted: it is fresh, it is cogent, it is ennobling still, were faith as simple as of old. Wherever the love of the Saviour reigns in a soul, its blessedness is sought where he sought his, and it is found in the abundant consolations which he often supplies—a reward, not for our works, but in them.\*

\* See on the subject of this chapter Boardman's "Bible in the Family," Lect. v.

## CHAPTER XV.

## A HAPPY HOME.

Goodness Essential to Happiness—Misery Synonymous with Sin—The Moral Structure of Home—The Will of God—The Love of Jesus—Subordination—Home Unknown in some Lands—Results—Examples—Rev. Edward Bickersteth—Mrs Henry Venn.

THE happiness of Home depends upon the goodness of its members. Without that, all the gold of Ophir, or worldly prosperity till even ambition were sated, could not lead to blessedness. One sin turned our world into a blighted abode. The speedy effects were domestic recrimination, the death of one son, the banishment of another as a fratricide, and, no doubt, untold agony on the part of the parents. From that day to this, sin and misery have been more closely linked than twins. Every transgression has been a new germ of sorrow—nay, it was itself a woe—it involved pain, and that was punishment.\*

Nowhere are the fruits of transgression more copiously gathered than in a Home where the members are unholy. God has constituted Home just as he has constituted man—peace depends upon purity—the humblest or the youngest member there may agitate all by lawless conduct, so exquisitely delicate is the moral structure of Home. It may contain

"The only bliss  
Of paradise that has survived the Fall,"

\* The word *Pœna*, punishment, gives rise to the word *pain*, and in the Hebrew a similar idiom is found. Man's deepest convictions are confessed by the use of such terms. If *pain* be *punishment*, as nature views it, then how significant every ache, and pang, and tear!

Or it may be all true that in a Home

“All the charities  
Of father, son, and brother first were known”—

but still, these blessings depend upon the holiness of Home; and this may warrant some farther reference here to the component parts of Home happiness.\*

1. The will of God must be supreme. Let the divine order be reversed, that is, let man be supreme, and confusion is already paramount. On the other hand, let a father and a mother take the mind of God for theirs. Let their first question ever be, “What hath God said?” and their instant resolution, “That shall be law in our household, for it is the law of love,”—then all will be peaceful. No doubt, some member of that Home may decline such hal-  
lowing restraints, and in a family otherwise blessed such waywardness may occasion grief. But even then, there is a peace which that waywardness cannot ruffle: it cannot rob the God-fearing of the Saviour whom they love; and reposing upon him, they can perhaps cherish a gladdening hope even for the wayward. The light of their dwelling may enter it through stained glass, but it is the light of heaven still. Prayer is power; goodness is power; and though God will work no miracle even for these, the man who is upheld by God’s arm, will enjoy His peace.

2. Not merely should the mind of God be supreme in our Homes—the love of Jesus must reign. Without that, there

\* “Six things are requisite to create a happy Home. Integrity must be the architect, and tidiness the upholsterer. It must be warmed by affection, and lighted up with cheerfulness, and industry must be the ventilator, renewing the atmosphere, and bringing in fresh salubrity day by day; whilst over all, as a protecting canopy and defending glory, nothing will suffice except the blessing of God.”—“The Happy Home,” by Dr James Hamilton.

may be a kind of sunshine, a kind of happiness in a household, as there may be the gleam of a meteor in the darkest sky, or as rich wines may grow upon the slopes of volcanic mountains; but that happiness is one of the fading things of earth—it is at the mercy of every cloud of trial. It is when love links the soul to the Saviour—when parents love him, and when children are taught to do the same, that the blessedness of Home is rich, ample, satisfying. Parents and children are then travelling together to the house not made with hands; and while they eat their bread with a merry heart, the veriest crust may be sweetened by a sense of the Elder Brother's love. Such Homes are the preserving salt of society, else hastening to corruption. At the feet of Christ old and young may gather happiness; but till faith conduct them thither, their sweetest portion is only an apple of Sodom, or the grapes of Gomorrha.

3. Next to these we rank subordination, for God is the God of order. Parents subordinate to Him, and children subordinate to parents, form the Divine gradations; and to depart from these is to be unhappy. Let parenthood be dethroned, and self-willed ignorance suffered to control, and the happiness of that Home has perished. Let the love of vanity, or deference to the world, or alien interests of any kind interpose, and family dispeace will instantly ensue—for to reverse God's plan is to make man unhappy. But like water welling up from some deep springhead, may be the blessedness of that homestead where all the members are in the place which God designs them to hold.

No doubt, sin has blighted our world, but still there is a large residue of joy; and though we would paint no fool's paradise, or present no fancy sketch, countless avenues are

open for the enjoyment of blessedness by man. If God be our Father and heaven our destination, its windows will often be open to shed down a blessing, but amid this affluence of happiness, the serenest of all will be found in a Christian Home. There a peace from on high descends. There the wicked may cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest. All that is needed to make it so, is to place God upon the throne—to let the Saviour's love constrain, and the order which our Father appoints, be observed. It is never to be doubted that there are such Homes—many of them—possessing attractions which no art can augment, nor aught else in nature match.

“ By the gathering round the winter hearth,  
When twilight called unto household mirth,  
By the fairy tale, or the legend old,  
In that ring of happy faces told,  
By the quiet hour when hearts unite  
In the parting prayer, and the kind good-night,  
By the smiling eye, and the loving tone,  
Over thy life has a spell been thrown,”

and the unselfish act, the kindly greetings, the sympathies and charities which circulate there, tell us what earth would have been had men continued sinless, and what heaven will be when men are sinless once more.

But, by contrast, all this becomes clearer when we repeat that there are whole nations where Home and its happiness are unknown. Superstition has soured men's sympathies; and in many a place it sets wife against husband, son against father, and daughter against mother, so that the very idea of Home is lost. Instead of family subordination, there is family turmoil; and God's ordinance outraged ever renders man's unhappiness intense. In the train of all this,

profligacy has come to wither all that remained of Home felicity ; and there is truth in the verdict, that the contempt in which domestic pleasures are held by many, is a proof of prevailing ignorance of true enjoyment. That argues a defect in taste and judgment as well as morals ; for the voice of the experienced has in all ages declared that the truest happiness is to be found at Home.\* Lord Byron early learned to sneer at such happiness ; and we know what his portion was. A thousand besides him have done the same, and discovered, when all too late, that the man who makes Home a wilderness, rifles the tree of life of its fruit. It is strong language, but the undercurrent is true :—" Were fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, mutually loved and loving as they might and ought to be, we need not wait for another world to find our heaven : we would find it here. Each little family might or would be such a heaven, an earthly and a perpetual preparative for that ultimate abode which is the grand archetype of all that is blessed here, and which is presented in Holy Writ under this very image—that of a ' Father's House.' "†

## EXAMPLES.

We cannot restore paradise to man, then, but God can replace him in another Eden, and the nearest approach to that on earth is Home.

To exemplify its blessedness, it might suffice to advert again to the picture which Burns has drawn in the "Cottar's Saturday Night;" but we turn from that to contemplate a

\* See Knox's "Essays."

† See "Happiness, its Elements and Means, Simple and Common," by Rev. John Purves.

similar blessedness in a different sphere. Visitors to the Rectory of Watton, when Edward Bickersteth was its occupant, have spoken of the teeming happiness of that Home. All seemed to be so pervaded by the will of God that a very perfect peace prevailed. Worship was the joy at once of parent and of child, while the spirit of love reigned paramount. And they who thus honoured God were honoured by Him—He made each soul there double-handed against evil, and ere that father was summoned away to his rest and his reward, he could cherish the hope that all his children were reconciled to God—renewed, pardoned, happy—he died full of the conviction that they would all meet as a family in heaven for ever. Now, that was surely a happy Home; and, compared with that, what are the hollow felicities which mere wealth provides for the guilty? We might place such a soul “in a palace. We might promote it to tread ankle-deep on obsequious carpets. We might bid Araby breathe over it, and Golconda glitter around it. We might encircle it with clouds of hovering satellites, and put upon its head the wishing-cap of wealth. But if we have not taken the barb from its memory, or the festered wound from the spirit, the pale foreboding, the frequent gloom, the startled slumber, will pronounce these splendours mockery, and all this luxury a glittering lie.”\* It is the blended fear and love of God that render Home happy.

And that was another happy Home where the children were taught that “the poorest parish girl who loved the Lord Jesus is a right honourable person, while the son of a king who neglects him is of a base spirit and in the meanest condition.” That was a happy Home where the husband could say of the

\* Dr Hamilton's “Happy Home.”



wife, "A perfect similarity of sentiment on subjects of highest moment prevailed. It continued here till her removal to glory, and will endure to all eternity in heaven." That was a happy Home where religion, "instead of being worn on a Sunday, or confined to the closet, was the constant enlivening subject of discourse each day,"—and whose inmates understood that the people of God are "not merely an army with banners in the field of battle, but are garrisoned in a strong city, having salvation for walls and bulwarks." That was a happy Home in which the conviction reigned, that "not one of the sheep of Christ could perish, for the promise and the oath of Jehovah stood engaged to preserve them unto the end,"—where the conflict with sin was daily carried on in a Saviour's strength, and where tribulations which brought the body to the grave only brightened the soul for glory, as burnishing brightens steel.

Now, all these were realised in the Home of Henry Venn,\* and what is needed indefinitely to multiply such families of the happy? Only this—Let the will of God be supreme: let the love of Jesus reign: let the Divine order of subordination be maintained, and God will there "supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

\* See "An Account of Mrs Henry Venn," by her Husband.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## AN UNHAPPY HOME.

Sorrow in our Streets—The Cause—A Picture of Squalor—Success for a Season—Accumulated Woe—Modifications—A Victim—Examples—A Prayerless Father—A Drunkard's Request.

WE witness many a trying scene in the streets of a crowded city. It is winter, and there is a group of children shivering amid the frost: every muscle and fibre in their frame is an inlet for pain. A little farther, and one meets a son hastening with a rude coffin, which he has perhaps begged at the workhouse, for the burial of his mother. A little farther still, and a funeral approaches, where the mourners are so poor that they follow their father or their friend to the graveyard in the garments which they wore an hour ago at their toil by the wayside. In the next street, we perhaps encounter a mother, with an emaciated infant, hurrying to purchase, or solicit from charity, the drug to which she still fondly looks for life. A little farther still, you may meet—the saddest sight of them all—a drunken mother reeling homeward, if she can find the way, with head-gear all dishevelled and awry, a countenance bloated by vice or distorted by passion, and a feeble child swinging to and fro in her arms, like a withered leaf just ready to drop from its parent tree. These, and a thousand more, are sights which must either distress or harden the onlooker. It is a sad alternative, but is not the latter the more common result?

Now, some of these sights were occasioned by unhappy homes. It was dispeace there that originated at least a portion of that obtruded misery, and in that connexion let us glance at an unhappy home.

Its interior is offensive at first sight. Physical uncleanness typifies the moral condition. There is no fear of God. There is no worship, but blasphemy is rife. There is no subordination, but there is rebellion in provoking words and in outrageous deeds. As fagots piled together and ignited, mutually help combustion, the untamed souls in such abodes are the plagues of each other. The father is perhaps a drunkard, and in seeking refuge from his oppression, the mother has become the same. The children, inured to all the sights and sounds of iniquity at home, soon become impostors abroad, and if their impositions do not succeed, only the scowl and the curse of their parents await them. When Sardanapalus of old saw that he must die, his proud though effeminate heart recoiled from the thought of meeting death from the hand of an enemy. He therefore erected a funeral pile within his palace: he mounted it, together with his household, and there they perished, a holocaust to pride. Now what else is a godless parent doing for his children? Is it not true that "they are far from safety, that they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them?"\* Housed in an ivory palace, or robed in cloth of gold, they could not be happy.

There are, no doubt, families of this class where children are trained as the sons of Belial, and who get success for a season—they seem even to flourish like a green bay-tree. Some have grown rich by plunder, and their case has sug-

\* Job v. 4.

gested the question, "Is there a God that judgeth in the earth?" But the answer is, "God seeth that their day is coming." Their sin finds them out, and sin and misery, we repeat, are in such a case but synonymes.—Amid the sultry hours of summer, the body often feels uneasy, and we scarcely know the cause. The air is loaded with some influence which makes life uncomfortable, and we pant, or we complain, without being able to assign a reason. At length, a thunder peal is heard, and now the mystery is read. The atmosphere was charged with what some nervous natures cannot endure, and there is an analogy to this in the moral world. Like pent-up thunder, woe comes at last upon the guilty, and the crash is often terrific. But a living philanthropist has stated this case so graphically and so well, that his words should be repeated.

Speaking in defence of the Sabbath, he says, "Suppose that an unbroken seven-days' week of toil goes round and round unceasingly. What becomes of cleanliness and order in the house and household of the working-man? All soon gets into confusion; instead of comfort, there is chaos; nothing has a place, and nothing is in its place—save dirt, and that is everywhere. The furniture, knowing no rest, wears out prematurely, like its master; work is always behind, for the hand, however busy, can seldom reach the right thing, in the right place, at the right time; and in the midst of arrears and disarray, the wearied wife at length sits down, desperately content with a domestic litter scarce more inviting than the dunghill that is reeking at her door. With disorder comes sloth and slatternliness; with dirt comes disease. In the unswept and unwashed nooks, the fruitful seeds of pest and fever are putting forth their germs, and

children sicken and die. Mayhap they are but little mourned. For the father, late at nightly work, seldom sees his child; the child scarce knows his father; the domestic affections and ties are all but unfelt; and in their stead grow selfishness, hatred, and discontent. Recriminations become bitter and constant; and the hard word is soon followed by the harder blow. Bodies are wasting—souls are withering. Drink brings false refreshment to the one, with a falser comfort to the other. The downward course is now fierce and fearful. The home becomes a hovel; the household, waifs—drunkards—beggars—dead!”

But there are modifications of this. One member of such a family may be of “another spirit.” It is a wife united to a husband who, in other days, promised better things, but is now rushing upon self-ruin, incensed because he cannot drag her along with him to the same excess of riot. How she suffers! How she cowers before the unmanly tyrant! How her weeping eye appeals, but all in vain! The taunt, the curse, the blow, are the gradations of a wretchedness which is nearly complete. Now, is that a Home? Yes, but it is the home of one who has taken seven unclean spirits into his soul, and who is goaded to fury because all are not so profane or so profligate as he is—“He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind,” is the divine verdict upon such a man, while his victim may wail forth the prayer—

‘Pour on my aching thoughts the heavenly balm  
Of Thy peace-giving comfort, and the more  
The ties of man's affections shew themselves  
Time-worn and fragile, and the more the joys  
And trusts of this life vanish from my path,  
Grant my best thoughts and wishes may be turned  
To Thy eternal promises and love.”

We need not describe minor cases, after having pointed to

the fountain of all. Where a father or a mother dare not rebuke iniquity for fear of the deserved retort, "Physician, heal thyself"—where there is no tie but such as unites hyenas in their den—or no aim but who shall tyrannise the most—what can result but wretchedness? Yet there is one modification more to which we must advert. There are homes where affluence spreads out its attractions, and where the courtesies of life prevail. There is kindness in intercourse, there are considerate efforts to please. There is the hand of benevolence held out, while all around seems unruffled, and yet it is **certain** that such a home must be unhappy, if God be not honoured there, if His Word be unread, His salvation unsought. There may be the absence of the gross or the offensive, but there is the presence of utter ungodliness notwithstanding, and that makes misery sure. We see many sad spectacles on earth—man wasting inch by inch into the grave—widows agonized by the cry of their orphans for bread when there is no bread to give them—feeble fingers making their own grave-clothes—or godly parents weeping for the moral death of children. But one of the saddest sights of all, is a Home where God is on system forgotten, or ignored. It is like quenching the sunshine, or poisoning the wells from which hundreds must draw and drink.

#### EXAMPLES.

The records of public crime might supply copious illustrations here, but we prefer a private example. A father and a mother live in a humble yet decent worldly sphere. They have a family growing up around them, and there is no pressing want in the household, for the income is a competency, and a little more. Yet that abode is sometimes like

the home of one possessed. The father was never heard to pray, nor to ask the Great Giver to bless a repast. He ate his food in speechless sullenness—sometimes without uttering a syllable from the moment of his entering till he withdrew. The children of that father dreaded him, and their mother not seldom intensified their fears as an unwise relief to her own deep sorrow. There was no fear of God in that abode, and as far as either Scripture or experience can guide us, its inmates were unhappy whenever they were at home. The family disappeared at last from its place ; but if the sovereign grace of God did not interpose, its members were trained for a terrible heritage. It is sad to see parents weep over the moral ruin of children ; but that woe has a counterpart not less painful, when children are made wretched by the vices of their parents. While the great fallen angel was in his place of torment he was harmless ; but when he was allowed to enter Eden, for purposes then deeply wrapped in mystery, but gradually unfolded since, his hellish power gave the globe a shock ; and, in like manner, such crime as has been glanced at, when seen in the sacred enclosure of Home, corrupts society at the root and to the core.

But parental ungodliness appears in other forms. A father staggering under the effects of strong drink applied to a minister of religion for the baptism of his child. The request was startling, and an appeal was made to the squalid man as to the contradiction between his conduct and his wish. He confessed the truth of the appeal, but added, that though he might be ruining his own soul, he did not wish to lose his child's. He looked upon baptism with the eyes of ignorance or superstition, and regarded it as a spell which could save ; but blind as the answer and his whole





## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE TRIALS OF HOME.

The First Death—The Mystery—Its Solution—A Thorn in the Nest—The Worst Form of Woe—David and Absalom—Examples—“*Sorrowing yet always Rejoicing*”—Lady — — Her Son's Execution.

WHEN the first death happens in a Home, it speaks with a voice which scarcely any other form of tribulation can equal. We read of wars, and battles, and thousands slain, but even these are far-off echoes to most, compared with our own first death. That blow falls upon the very heart, and though faith may enable even a mother to close the dying eye of her little one, and smile through her tears, exclaiming—

“ My Saviour, I do this for Thee ; ”

yet nature may be wrung with anguish, even while grace enables the tried one to triumph.

And the pang is often rendered more acute, or the stroke more severe, by the inscrutable mystery of a little infant's death. Why these terrible convulsions? Why that low wail—that bleat, far worse for the parent to bear than a blow? Why that little frame pining slowly away, while skill is baffled in its attempts to discover the cause? Why is every breath a sigh or a moan, till even a mother sometimes flees from the sight and the sound, and feels that it would be a relief could her little sufferer die? And when all is over—when the little one is confined, and the marble

dust is about to be borne to the tomb, why that death at all? That little hand never did sin; that little heart never thought sin; and why, then, this living only to die—this infant shroud, that infant coffin and grave? Have my ains, a parent may ask, brought down this woe? Is this the iniquity of the fathers visited on the children?

Of this, at least, we are sure, "death passes upon all, for that all have sinned." "In Adam all die." Thus God shews the mystery, and bids us, when we cannot understand, be silent and adore. What we know not now, we shall know hereafter; and though our rifled homes may cause the heart to ache, yet if such bereavements urge the parents more sedulously to prepare for glory, the present tribulation will deepen and prolong the future hosannas of the tried.

And nature may symbolically teach us the same lesson. When we enter a mist-cloud as it drifts or hovers along the mountain-side which we are climbing, it sometimes dissolves around us so that the sunshine becomes undimmed. In like manner, if not here, at least hereafter, all the mist-clouds will clear away from before the parent who believes. Concerning his children torn from his embrace to the tomb, he may learn to say—

"For us they sicken and for us they die."

Meanwhile, could parents remember that they are encountering their cares, and weeping their tears, and bearing their cross, and seeing their hopes deferred to-day, or blighted to-morrow, while attempting to train their children for God, they would be stimulated to persevere, and not "faint in their minds."

But there is one form of grief more intense than even this. The trials which crowd our Homes are numerous,

and no doubt, one of the reasons may be that some would make their home their heaven. Their affections centre there; and their family is the Alpha and the Omega of their exertions, their joys, and their hopes. Now to prevent such idolatry, a thorn is often placed in the nest, and men find labour and sorrow where they expected only sunshine and smiles. There may be poverty, and that is bitter, or some disaster may threaten to strip our homes bare, but it is when trials assume the character of retributions that they convulse a household the most. It was hard for David to know that Absalom was no more; and that he perished a rebel against his king and father, made the pang more poignant still. But if that father associated that death with his own home misdeeds, his sorrow would be the acutest that man is doomed to feel. His touching wail, his characteristic Oriental outcry over his lost son, thus acquires a deeper meaning than before. "Would God I had died for thee," becomes not merely pathetic but profound.

And that is the climax of all anguish—to see an object of affection go down, we fear, to a darker home than the grave. It is sad for a widowed one to see the delight of her eyes, the husband of her youth, snatched away by death. It is agony to an affectionate family to see the mother who bore them, and bore with them, who nursed, fondled, trained, and prayed for them, carried to the narrow house. But a moral death causes a deeper wound—a more remediless sorrow, and nothing but Omnipotent grace can carry a sufferer through such a grief. While he drinks "the wine of astonishment," his solace may be—"It is the Lord," and "the Judge of all the earth will do right." But if the mourner find cause for self-accusation in connexion with his grief, his

sorrow culminates there, and amid such sadness the night-fall of life may often find us weeping over the errors of its morning. If, on the other hand, our sorrows come directly from another, our solace is more easily found. It will then be the believer's endeavour to be silent where he cannot understand ; and while he prays for repentance to the wanderer, he himself will forgive, remembering that he is what he is only by the grace of God.

#### EXAMPLES.

We have oftener than once seen two little children carried from the same home, at the same sad hour, and laid side by side in the same cold grave. We have known three little coffins brought to the same abode at one time, each to receive a little body, till the great resurrection should summon them back to life. These were surely sharp thorns in the nest, and as surely the mourning parents needed the Son of God to fill up such dreary blanks in their heart.

But there is one "Narrative of Successive Bereavements" more touching still. In a sequestered Highland manse, seven joyous children had their happy home. They were brought up in the nurture of the Lord, and as mind opened after mind, the knowledge of Jesus and his truth was taught. But that could not shield the young inmates of that abode from death. First one disease, and then another was sent by Him whom all things obey—and first one child, then another, then a third, and then a fourth sickened, withered, died. Scarcely had one little sufferer been laid in the grave when another was seized. The youngest, the oldest, and two between, were thus taken away amid the tears and the anguish, but also the prayers and the faith of the parents.

And there were bright gleams amid that gloom. The hearts of the little sufferers were touched by the grace of God. Jesus was signally precious; and though they who loved them well could not but mourn for the sore agony, and the early departure of their little ones, yet amid their sorrows they could also rejoice. The spiritual life which they beheld in their children, the outshootings of faith, of love, of humility, and repentance bade those parents kiss the rod: they did it, and saw glimpses of glory shedding hope, like the rainbow brightening the storm. Child after child opened up the mind to the love of Christ, as little flowers open to the rising sun, and those lilies gathered are now for ever beyond all danger of fading.—Such things are scarcely deaths, at least to faith. They are but removing to the Home where the weary are at rest, and become blessings to the tried when the prayer, at once sublime and lowly, is offered—

“‘Thy will be done,’ God of the desolate!

Teach me with heart resigned and calm to say,

‘Thy will be done.’”

But there are sadder trials sent to some Homes than even four deaths in six brief weeks. “Think of Lady ——,” wrote the Rev. Thomas Scott to a disconsolate parent—“her eldest son executed as a murderer, a hardened wretch till the last hour—the only hope this, that in his rage in casting himself off, the rope broke and he lived till another was fetched, perhaps ten minutes, and seemed during that time softened, and earnestly crying for mercy. Yet I never heard from her lips a murmuring word.” . . . . These are, indeed, the trials of Home; and when grace enables the soul to triumph, or at least to endure, we have there one of the most vivid displays of its power that earth can ever witness.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## THE ECONOMY OF HOME

God's View of Man's Possessions—Man's own View—Maxims in Home Economy

—1. Make all you Can — 2. Save all you Can — 3. Give all you Can — The Great Giver — All Things Give—Examples—Colonel Mack—John Gaspar Lavater.

TESTED by the Word of God, man's conduct soon displays his wide revolt from the King of kings. Take the single subject of money, or property, or what we call our own, and what is the mind of the Great Proprietor on the subject? It is briefly this, "Occupy till I come;" or, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;" or, "What have we that we have not received;" or, "The silver is mine; the gold also is mine, saith the Lord." In spirit, and in all the fulness of their meaning, these clauses of God's Word assign all to Him as His property, His by right of creation, His absolutely and without challenge for ever.

But next, what is the mind of man upon this subject? He forgets that he is a steward, and claims the position of a proprietor. He overlooks the rights of God, and acts as if the creature might dispose of himself and all that he holds without consulting the sovereign Lord of all. Perhaps there are millions in this land who never, in a single instance, consulted the will of God according to His Word, in using what He has lent to them.

This, then, should become an object of concern in every home which professes to be Christian. Would we train up children to be faithful stewards—to feel their responsibility, and act for the Sovereign of all? Then a scriptural economy should pervade our homes. An habitual reference to God's righteous claims should be made, and the three following maxims, in the hands of Christian parents, may help to guide us in this matter :\*—

I.—Make all you can.      II.—Save all you can.

III.—Give all you can.

1. **MAKE ALL YOU CAN.**—That ensures industry, and of all our books, the Bible is one of the most urgent in pressing an earnest activity upon us. According to it, if any man will not work he is not to eat. The slothful are turned into a proverb, and the sluggard is sent to a puny insect for a model or a reproof. Every house, then, should be active as a bee-hive. Man should ever be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ; and even those who are so rich that they need not toil, may just the more easily learn to imitate Him who went about doing good. Superstition may seek its excellence in a cloister, or think that it has subdued the world when it has only fled from it. But God's holy truth consecrates industry, and presses us to be diligent, for "The hand of the diligent maketh rich."

But, 2. **SAVE ALL YOU CAN.**—Earn, but not to squander. Work and win, but not that you may glory in profusion, or employ wealth to pamper vanity. Learn to say, and accustom your children to say, "I can do without it ;" and the money thus saved may surprise you by its increase ; it may

\* See Wesley's Sermon "On the use of Money."

seem to possess some magnetic or attractive power. Guineas have been called gregarious ; and one man, at least, who began life with a penny for his portion, ended in having thousands upon thousands for his yearly income, while his annual givings were about two thousand pounds. It was one of his stated maxims to save all he could, and never to waste even the worthless things which many tread in the dust ; and were parents wisely to inculcate the maxim, Save all you can, Home might far more frequently become both more happy, and more fertile in wholesome influences upon all around it.

But, 3. Were we to pause at this point, these directions would seem only rules for making misers. To be constantly toiling to gain, and constantly watching how to save, might train us to be grovelling earthworms, and nothing more. The third maxim, which is the keystone of the arch, should therefore be prominently urged. GIVE ALL YOU CAN is a golden rule ; and were it obeyed in a right spirit, it would make man truly godlike. Give to the poor, give to spread the truth of God, give to dissipate the darkness or soothe the sorrows of man ; give as God gives ability, and in doing so, grow more like God himself. For what is God ever doing in His world ? He is constantly giving, and has created everything to give. The sun and the moon give light. The earth pours abundance into the lap of man. Autumn gives its overflowing plenty. The lower animals give us clothing, and add their fleetness, their strength, their very life. All, all are ceaselessly giving, for their Maker has stamped His own bountiful nature upon them, making them His ministers to supply the wants of every living thing. Like a perennial fountain, casting forth its copious



waters, all Nature is thus scattering abroad the munificence of our God.

Now, should our homes not be places where men are taught to do as God does? Shall man make money, or save money only to hoard it—to pamper self, or smooth the road to ruin? Nay, but in as far as we have been taught by heavenly wisdom, our homes will be ruled by the Sovereign Will. Who gave His Son to die for us? Who loved us, and gave himself for us? Who gave His own peace to His people? Who gave us everlasting life? God our Saviour; and, as his disciples, we are to draw down his blessings upon our families, by acting in his spirit, and responding to his love. The greatest giver thus becomes the most godlike man, and it is soon made manifest that one large element in the happiness of home is to cherish a bountiful spirit, that the widowed and the fatherless may rejoice.

## EXAMPLES.

If we really wish to practise the divine art of giving, the following examples may both guide and encourage us:—

Colonel Mack, an American, had learned that art, and assiduously impressed it upon others. By activity and enterprise he rose to great affluence—that is, he made all he could. But did he use it to encourage pride or ostentation in his home? or did he act like the fool in Scripture, who spoke only of *his* goods, and *his* fruits, and *his* barns, forgetting that they were all another's? Nay, he first trained his children in the fear of God. He next habituated them to active industry. Then he educated them thoroughly according to their sphere in life; and next, he gave each

enough for commencing life with fair prospects of success, if principle presided over their conduct—such principle as had been inculcated under their father's roof.

But side by side with all this, Colonel Mack gave all he could, and his benefactions were counted by thousands of pounds. Here a little and there a little, as he saw the poor or the struggling requiring help, was one of his maxims; while every measure which tended to promote God's glory found his hand open, because his heart was open first. He was a life member of twelve benevolent societies; and in educating poor but deserving youths, in disseminating Christian books, in upholding God's truth, and spreading the Redeemer's glory, he was at once liberal and unwearied. It was said of him when he died, "Not a pound, no, not a penny was found hid in the earth, or laid up in a napkin." He had literally given all he could; and were the spirit of this steward common, the future of the world would look brighter than it does. Mack died the death of the righteous; and when he went up to his rest, confessing as he did that he was just "a sinner saved by grace," he left behind him a very model of life. Not merely while here, but since his going hence, the example of that godlike man has served both as a warning and a stimulant to many.

Farther, John Gaspar Lavater was not merely an ingenious physiognomist, but moreover a devout and simple-minded Christian. At his family devotions, on a certain occasion, he had expatiated upon giving, and chose as his text for the day, "Give to him that asketh; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." And one did ask that day from Lavater, but he did not give. The suppliant for aid offered an heir-loom volume in pledge, if

the needed aid were advanced ; but still it was declined under various pretexts.

But while he was parrying the request, one of Lavater's household, who not merely heard the text of the day commended, but tried to obey it, overheard the entreaty, and pressed the application. Some of her trinkets were at once surrendered to meet the emergency, and the teacher was thus compelled to become the scholar. He was shamed out of his pretexts, and wrote that evening in his diary, "I felt convinced that there is no peace except where principle and practice are in perfect accordance. How peacefully and happily I might have ended this day, had I acted conscientiously up to the blessed doctrines which I profess! Dear Saviour, teach me to employ what thou hast committed to my charge to thy glory, a brother's welfare, and my own salvation."

Such, then, is a glimpse of the economy of Home. It is thus that extravagance is checked, and the mammon of unrighteousness made our friend. Blessed is the man who has discovered that he is a steward, not a proprietor, and who trains his children to remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive! How rare is that conviction, yet how gladdening when it reigns in a heart or in a home! Were such home economy habitually taught to the young, the churches would be less encumbered than they are, by those whose practice, in regard to riches, too often belies their profession.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## MAXIMS FOR HOME.

The Bird's Nest—The Bible—God's care for little things—Maxims—1. Let God be ever first—2. Not a moment to spare—3. Remember the power of little—4. I will try—5. Never be Idle—6. Be Happy and make Happy—7. Attend to "Minor Morals"—8. Never say, We must do as others do.

ONE of the most wonderful traits, in the most wonderful of all books, is the passage which says, "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young, but thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days."\* It is thus that the all-bountiful God takes care even of a little bird; nay, it is thus that He perils man's welfare upon his regard for a thing so insignificant. The Book which contains such lessons is one in which all extremes meet—the human and the divine, the microscopic and the infinite, the transient and the eternal.

And just as the God of the Bible does not refuse to legislate for little things, a wise householder will try to learn a lesson from such mercy. While all the weightier matters of duty are attended to, the more minute will not be neglected by any well-wisher to Home; and to promote its happiness,

\* Deut. xxii. 67.

some maxims are submitted, embracing at once the greatest and the least of duties.

And, I. LET GOD BE EVER FIRST.—This is the secret of all home happiness ; it is the basis of all that is right, whether it relate to God or to man, and a few examples may shew the importance of this maxim.

My neighbours, one may say, have adopted a style of life which I am tempted to imitate, though it is extravagant and foolish. The answer to that temptation is, Whether is it your neighbour or your God that should guide you ? Whose verdict stands first and highest ?

My children will feel restrained and unhappy, another says, if I rule and mould my home according to God's simple word, and I am therefore tempted to relax a little. Then say, is it not your children instead of God that you put first ?

My business will suffer, and my home must be humbler, suggests a third, if I adopt all the maxims which the Holy One prescribes, and I think it possible to modify a little so as to retain my business, and still be right at heart. Then manifestly that man's business, and not his Bible or his God, is put first.

Again, It is painful to be singular. Why be righteous overmuch ? Religion is surely not so unbending as some suppose.—Such is the sophistry of some men, and to what does it amount ? It means that the appointments of God may be superseded, and man's likings preferred to Jehovah's revelations.

But in truth, where such things appear, that family is most probably already drifting upon ruin, like an abandoned ship. God is the Alpha and the Omega of the Christian's

heart, the Christian's home and life. Whatever he does in word or deed, he does all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

**II.—NEVER HAVE A MOMENT TO SPARE.**—This maxim has acquired the currency of a proverb in our hard-driving age. Everything is done in breathless haste, and most men appear as if they individually felt that some mighty destinies are suspended upon their movements. They run to and fro. They make haste to be rich. "The flurry fever" has seized upon our millions, and they are constantly on the wing, be it in the crowded mart or in the solitary place.

Yet this maxim, soberly viewed and wisely applied, may become a valuable auxiliary in guiding a home. It is right that whatever we do, we should do it with all our might, and time redeemed is good accomplished. True, the maxim in the lips of many means, I have not a minute to spare for the things of eternity, for serving God, for attending to my soul, for deeds of charity, for the one thing needful—all these must wait till other points are adjusted. But when that spirit prevails in a home, its inmates are in the broad road: it will be a time of terror when they must spare their minutes to die. Children thus reared in youth will most probably be found steeped in worldliness when the head is hoary. But is this maxim earnestly applied to the good, the holy, and the true? Then it means, I have not a minute to spare in folly, nor in fighting against God, nor in what would endanger either my own soul or the souls of others. "Spare moments are the gold-dust of existence." Time is eternity in the bud, and if I waste the one, I destroy myself in the other. Every parent whom God makes wise will mould his home upon maxims like these. Remembering John Wesley's words, "Always in haste, but never in a hurry," he will try

to add to the years of his children by training them to husband each hour as it passes.

*Take care of your minutes* is but another form of the same maxim. Half the years of some men run to waste, because that maxim is neglected. The most popular and voluminous commentator on the Scriptures in our day, wrote all his commentaries before the usual hour of breakfast.\* Edward Gibbon composed his ponderous pages between seven in the morning and the same hour at night, and arrangements so orderly tend to double life.

And mark in how many ways this maxim may be applied.

Have you some poor dependant to aid ? Then make haste. You have not a minute to spare.

Have you to explain some error or some hasty expression by which you have given pain ? Then the sooner the better both for yourself and others. You have not a minute to spare.

Would you make some widow's heart glad, or impart happiness to some orphan ? Then do not delay. If you spare a minute, it is at the cost of a sufferer's sorrow.

If you are still without God and without hope, should you not make haste ? Have *you* a minute to spare ?

If your friend, or brother, or child, be still ignorant of God's truth, should you not spare many a minute from minor objects to cry to God on his behalf ?—And so of a thousand other things. The maxim is a catholicon applicable to every case and at all times.

III.—REMEMBER THE POWER OF LITTLES.—A star seems a little thing, yet it is perhaps a world. A word—how quickly spoken—how soon forgotten ! Yet there may be

\* Rev. A. Barnes.

life or death eternal in it. A blow of the hand—how like a flash it may be, yet may it lead to ignominy, to exile, or even a scaffold. Moses was little when he lay in his ark of bulrushes, yet he lived to be the plague of a king, and the means of delivering some millions of slaves. Napoleon Bonaparte was once little, yet what an Apollyon he became at last ! There is, in truth, nothing little which can be connected with eternity and God. The decision of an hour may influence us for ever—

"The summer breeze that fans the rose,  
Or eddies down some flowery path,  
Is but the infant gale that blows  
To-morrow with the whirlwind's wrath ;"

and though he was wise who said concerning man, "A little sheet will wind him, a little grave will hold him, a little worm will eat him," he was not less wise who wrote, "It is but the littleness of man that sees no greatness in a trifle." Life is made up of little incidents, not of brilliant achievements, and upon the little the eternal hangs.

But all that need be said upon this maxim might be summed up in the lines whose truth apologises for their quaintness—

"Little drops of water, little grains of sand,  
Make the boundless ocean and the beauteous land ;  
And the little moments, humble though they be,  
Make the mighty ages of eternity.  
Little deeds of kindness, little words of love,  
Make the earth an Eden, like the heaven above ;  
Little deeds of mercy done by infant hands,  
Grow to bless the nations far off in heathen lands."

Or farther : philanthropy has seized on this maxim, and employed it to improve and elevate mankind, whose happiness rarely depends on the great or the glaring. "The accu-



mulation of your littles," it has been said, to the people, "will form into a mightier sum than all the united gifts that the rich have yet thrown into the treasury. What! do you not know that a penny a-week from each householder in Britain amounts to half-a-million of pounds sterling in the year?"\* . . . Now this is turning arithmetic into morality: it is godlike, for it achieves grand results by little agencies, and, as the Almighty bounds the ocean by sand-grains, or fills it by drops, when man learns to imitate Him, he has caught the inspiration of that wisdom which comes from above; he is a fellow-worker with the Mighty One, who is glorified alike by the microscope and the telescope.†

The applications of this maxim are manifold.

There is a little child at prayer. The great God is teaching him, and it is therefore the prayer of faith. It is consequently heard and answered. The cry was for a new heart. A new heart is given, and now immortal life begins.

Again: there is a youth perpetrating a sin. It is deemed little, but it is not; it is familiarising him to transgress. He pilfers—he steals—he robs; and the first dishonest deed was the letting out of water. Fools made a mock at it; affection excused it; but that little thing ruined a soul,—as one sin, which is often turned into mirth as a trifle, transformed our world into one vast graveyard, and all its people into one vast funeral procession.

IV. I WILL TRY, is another maxim which should be often

\* Hanna's Life of Chalmers, vol. i. p. 267.

† Samuel Budgett, of Bristol, thoroughly understood the power of littles. He once saw a potato at his foot, and asked an aged workwoman to lift it, plant it, and preserve the produce from year to year, promising to find her ground on which to conduct the experiment. In two or three years she had a sackful, and, had he lived, the ground required would soon have been acres.

current in our homes. The word *impossible* should be blotted from the believer's language, in regard to all that God has made duty, and "I will try," should be used in its stead. Were the trial made in faith, it would assuredly succeed.

I will try to do all the good I can.

I will try never to give offence.

I will try to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

I will try to walk humbly with my God.

I will try to rule my home in God's fear.

I will try to conquer myself—a greater triumph than to take a city.

I will try to live under the power of Christ's love.

I will try to guide my children all to him.

I will try not to imitate those whose religion is left in their Bibles, and who never plant it in the heart that it may guide the life. Nay, I will shun as poison the maxim of those who keep religion and business apart, as if the one were not the regulator of the other. But why enumerate more? To every jot of a believer's duty this maxim may apply; and when we take hold of the proffered Omnipotence, our success in such efforts is made sure.

In one of the southern states of North America, there lately lived a negro, a slave, who was anxious to learn to read—and he tried. He was an artizan, and prevailed upon his owner's children to write the letters of the alphabet on the door of his workshop. After learning them, he proceeded to form them into words, and could read. He then advanced to the study of Latin and Greek, and was prevented from learning Hebrew, only because he could not procure the needful books. Now, at every stage that resolute man was acting upon the maxim, "I will try." He

both tried and succeeded ; and though the words happily grate harshly on a Briton's ear, that man was at last purchased from his owner, and sent as a missionary to Africa, to try to win his dark-souled countrymen to Christ.

But examples of the power of this maxim appear in every sphere. The Abbate Mezzofante tried to study languages, and he mastered nearly thirty. Professor Lee, of Cambridge, was once a carpenter, but amid many difficulties, he also tried, and at the age of little more than thirty he could speak in seventeen tongues. Now were parents as resolutely to try to cultivate right habits in their homes, they would smile to see fancied difficulties melting away. Childhood is the stage for inculcating such habits, as the soft state of the clay is the stage at which the vessel must be moulded by the potter. Let the moral potter try, then, and the result may be vessels meet for the Master's use. Right habits are thoughts or maxims embodied in acts ; and a wise parent will never think that his lessons are effectual till such actions appear.

V. Another maxim may be this : **NEVER BE IDLE**.—True, we must have relaxation. The young especially demand it, and no wise parent will withhold what the religion of love so beautifully inculcates. But while home is made a place of buoyant joy, that end will be best promoted by wisely alternating activity and repose. And the highest Model of all good is peculiarly our model in regard to activity. Follow the Saviour through all his wanderings—in the desert place or in the crowded city, on the mountain-side or by the margin of the lakes which his presence has consecrated, by day or by night, in the garden, or on the very Cross, and he was ever working his Father's work : he rested just to be

more fit for exertion : he slept, but when he awoke it was to hush a tempest ; and the believer in Jesus will try to imitate his example.

Or do we seek rather a merely human model ? Then we are told of one who “seemed born under a decree *to do*,” that “doing, doing, ever doing, he seemed to abhor idleness more than the Nature of the old philosophy abhorred a vacuum.” It was irksome to that man to spend an idle hour. He accordingly did the work of several men, and his home, guided by such a father, appears to have been one of the most happy of all the Homes of England. A busy family is most likely to be a happy one, for idleness proverbially leaves us at the mercy of the tempter.\*

VI. Another maxim for Home is, **BE HAPPY AND MAKE HAPPY**. Now, happiness does not depend on some great or striking event, but rather upon things which seem small and insignificant, as rain drops from the shower, and at length the flood. A kind deed kindly done, a kind word kindly spoken, nay, a smile or a look, may be all that is needed, and a thing so trivial may spread a radiant sunshine through a Home. All the year may be made a summer by such simple means.

And how countless the sources of home-happiness if the Word of God be the guide ! Are there poor at hand ? A single loaf would make both them and us happy. Are there the ignorant to teach ? A Bible or a book would shed light. Are the sorrowing near ? Then point them to the Man of Sorrows, or tell of the Spirit, the Comforter. Like seed-corn, our happiness is increased by being thus diffused. Like the light,

\* More than one man is known who acquired several languages during the time so commonly lost, or worse, in waiting for dinner.

it should spread ; like heat, it should radiate ; and amid many sorrows, that abode is a happy one where the members aim at such results.

But the world deems such things the cause of sorrow or of bondage, not of happiness—how falsely, the believer need not be told. It was the resolution of President Edwards never to say aught upon the Sabbath that would provoke a laugh ; and the world would deem that a Sabbatarian fanaticism. Yet the Home of Edwards was one of the most blessed ever seen on earth ; there went forth from it soul after soul prepared through grace to work the work of God ; and it is thus that the happiness of Home will spread when it is the happiness of the children of God.

VII. ATTEND TO “MINOR MORALS.”—By their *Petite Morale*, the French mean politeness, and that has its place in a Christian Home. The cordial desire to please, a sensitive shrinking from whatever would hurt or offend, and similar things, tend to sweeten all the intercourse of life. Parents should attend to them with care, as the inlets of much home-happiness, and where they are neglected, the Saviour’s truth has not free course in a household. If politeness be “morality in little things,” and if life be commonly made up of such things, no more is needed to shew how much our happiness depends upon them—the kindest, purest nature will cultivate this habit with greatest care, and the Word of God contains the principle which should guide us here as in all besides,—it teaches “each to esteem others better than himself.”\*

VIII. One maxim more must suffice. NEVER SAY WE MUST DO AS OTHERS DO.—That maxim has brought myriads

\* Read an interesting little book, “Things to be Thought of.”

to misery ; and parents should dare to be singular, if they would be Christian, or have Christian homes. The dead soul is swept down by the world's current, but the living stems it, and rejoices. Doing as others do in dress, in entertainments, in expenditure, or in pleasure, just perpetuates the reign of folly ; and parents who would flee from ruin, and make home truly happy, must resolutely turn such things from their door. Perhaps more of the moral health of Home depends upon this one maxim—*Dare to be singular, if to be singular mean to be Christian*—than any other that could be named. Paul knew it, and he practised it. The tongue of slander might revile, and those who neglected their own character might be busy with his ; but to him, or to any like-minded man, that is a light matter. He appealed from man to God, and then left all over till the judgment-day.

Whatever it may cost, then, God and not man must give law in our abodes, if we wish them to be blessed. If we evade His Word under any pretext, or if we be scared by the unscriptural opinion of others, we are not following the Lord fully. What is it to any man who fears God, how much he may be censured, if the censure be unchristian ? To his faith the believer should add courage to meet all such things ; and thus ruling his Home in the fear of God, and not of man, the peace of God would circulate there. That man's Home would become his castle indeed.

## CHAPTER XX.

## LEAVING HOME.

Emigration—Waywardness—The Love of Enterprise—Mungo Park—Large Cities—  
Their Perils—The Duty of Parents—Deserters from Home—Examples—Samuel  
Nugent Legh Richmond—James Nisbet—A Sailor.

IN an age like ours, when emigration is so rife, and when the ties to Home are often severed by necessity, or the strong current of custom, the time of leaving home has acquired a deeper significance than it had in the days of our fathers. The abode of infancy is often left not merely for the nearest city, but for the uttermost ends of the earth. "Now look on life—be strong," becomes a counsel more and more needed from year to year, for some forsake their father's home only to beg their way to the grave; others to plunge neck-deep into temptation; and only a few to find elsewhere what home might have richly supplied—namely, happiness and God.

Amid all perils, however, it is a part of the very constitution of home, that the young shall there be prepared for leaving it. They must be taught to look abroad over the world, and wisely select a sphere where a father's counsels may be obeyed, and a mother's prayers answered in the blessings of Heaven; where the spells of home may all life long be felt while the heart throbs, rather than the lips utter,

the ineffaceable impressions left upon youth by the doctrine, the reproof, the correction, and instruction in righteousness imparted under the roof now left perhaps for ever. •

The selected home may be in the heathy Hebrides, or in sunny India. It may be among icebergs in Greenland, or in the fertile plains of England. It may be along the deadly coasts of Africa, or in some of our own densely peopled cities. It may be amid the privations of missionary life, or the perils of a soldier's campaigning ; but all, or nearly all, must sooner or later contemplate such a separation, or "second weaning." The half of our education consists in preparing us for that event ; and few can look back to the day when the door of home was closed behind them as they launched into life, without remembering the deep and mingled feelings of the hour. Some have then felt as if they were wandering into some dense and tangled forest ; others as if plunging into a dark abyss ; and crowds have wept as they thought of the coldness they must thenceforth encounter.

And many things may tend to precipitate such a separation. The restraints of home are irksome, and it is abandoned for some more congenial sphere. The parental eye is too watchful for the waywardness of youth, to allow it to be easy under such supervision, and home is forsaken, that such restraint may be cast off. Or the love of enterprise stimulates. Mungo Park, leaving his cottage home on the banks of the Yarrow, and hastening away to the land of the Great Zahara, its horrors and its mysteries, represents this class. A stirring soul and an observant eye urge them to seek adventures, and when well-directed, such undomestic spirits have helped to widen the knowledge of mankind. The consecrated enterprise of Moffat, of Livingstone, and Barth, has pioneered the way



for civilisation and commerce—God's truth being at once their motive-power and their guide.

Leaving home, however, is in thousands of cases, an occasion of solemn moral peril, and many may then recall with tears the words which tell of a mother's care—

"She cannot now be at thy side,  
Thy tears to dry, thy feet to guide;  
Her voice no more can counsel thee  
Against the false world's flattery."

London annually absorbs thousands of youth from our rural districts, and other towns their proportion. Now amid such an influx of the inexperienced and the ignorant, how many are annually engulfed? How many homes are hung in sackcloth, how many hopes blighted, how many hearts half-broken? The moral wear and tear can be computed only in eternity; but consciences seared, prospects blasted, guilt contracted, premature deaths—all tell us somewhat of the dangers of leaving home. Youth soon learns to perpetrate without compunction, or utter without a blush, what would once have made the cheek turn pale, and from such attainments the downward career is as speedy, as it can easily be predicted.

Yet even amid such scenes, the grace of God and the stanch principle of a Christian, can keep the young erect. They will neither lie for gain, nor mar a parent's peace to please a godless companion, nor sell their souls for the profit of any idolater of gold. They may continue poor, but they will not be disreputable; they hold fast their integrity, and will not let it go, and these are the truly free—they refuse to be enslaved. Like Joseph, they remember that God's eye is on them. They stand in awe, and will not transgress, and like Joseph also, they may be exalted in due season. But

on the other hand, where conscience is torpid and cupidity stirring, many sell themselves for what cannot profit. We do not speak here of the midnight revel, or of scenes where the inexperienced are allured to dissipation, to theft and felony, to forgery and expatriation, but only of the temptations to which youth is exposed in the marts of business. Regarding these, we need not scruple to aver that the day when such perils are first encountered is the date of the ruin of many. Unholy companions by their taunts, and gain-loving masters by their requirements, all help to render the incline towards ruin more easy or inviting, and yet so steep and sure that return is impossible.

Now, if parents be as sensitively alive to the value of their children's souls as the Bible teaches them to be, it will become a solemn question how far the young, with principles unformed or not established, should be exposed to such perils, except at the bidding of imperative necessity. If God open the way, and lead into it, He will guard us there. But if parents, for mere gain, precipitate their children into such snares, need they complain if they see their sons returning in disgrace, or only to hide their shame in a grave? A hard, griping employer, a gilded pretender to religion, and a really devout man—how different their influence upon the young! And who does not see how eternity and all its issues hang on the selection which a parent makes, when his son first enters upon life—first plunges into the vortex where multitudes sink to rise no more? Can he be innocent, even though his son should escape, when it was gain not godliness, a provision for time, and no view to eternity, which decided his choice? Nay, surely he is preparing sorrow for his own heart and home, who does

not make the temptations which will assail his boy in the workshop, at the desk, or amid his relaxations, a subject for solemn watchfulness and forethought. When the breath of the world begins to sully the flowers which bloomed at home, affection should often grasp the horns of the altar.

But there is another view of leaving home. Some desert it. They cannot bear its piety, and a secret flight is the result; or passion is becoming the tyrant of the soul—or a crime has been committed—or parental training is unwise, because it is unscriptural—and for these, and similar causes, the ties which bind youth to home are snapt. The sea, or some foreign land, takes the place of the parental roof; and while such a deserter troubles his home, his own sorrows are multiplied.

Now, this might have been ranked among the sorest trials of home. The agony of suspense which such conduct has occasioned to parents—the sufferings, the shame, and the early death to which it has led in the case of many a wanderer—might all be beacons. But youth, in its wild ignorance, despises the warnings of age, and often discovers the depth of its error only in the wards of some hospital, whither it has been carried to die, or in the cells of some prison, to which crime, committed in some desperate hour, has brought it. To some such souls, the retrospect of home occasions a pang when all its happiness is recalled; while to others, home must appear as the fountain of their woe. The father, perhaps, led the way in shamelessness and sin. No prayer was ever uttered there; no offices of kindnesses circulated from heart to heart; no prudent counsels; no pointing to Heaven; no mutual plans for mutual happiness; never once was a family altar seen, or a family gathering for

any purpose but worldliness witnessed ; and to glance back at such a home can exert no reclaiming influence on any wayward youth. But, all this proclaims the mighty power for evil which the home or the family exerts when it is ruled by other maxims than those which God has appointed.

No doubt there are some compensations in the case of a few who have deserted home, and risen to worldly honour. Sir Cloudesley Shovel, one of our distinguished naval commanders, who fled from his home while an apprentice boy, as well as others, might be cited as examples. But even such successful deserters have reached their position through dangers and snares uncounted. They have become apostates : they have for a time been starvelings. While a father or a mother was weeping over their desertion, they have been reaping as they had sowed, while thousands have gone down to the grave ignoble and unknown, filled only with the fruits of their own devices.

## EXAMPLES.

Samuel Nugent Legh was the eldest son of the Reverend Legh Richmond, and it was the earnest wish of his father's heart that he should be trained for the Christian ministry. The early stages of his education pointed in that direction. The father kept him much under his own eye, and guarded him with scrupulous care from all that was likely to contaminate. But when removed at length from that guardianship, young Richmond formed a friendship which ended in his moral ruin, and it soon became necessary to remove the deluded youth from his father's home, where his example was likely to spread a moral infection. He was placed on board a merchant vessel, and, as a wanderer in the wide world, he had to make his own way amid the buffetings of life.

Now, few cases of leaving home ever were attended with deeper grief than this. Disappointed hopes on the part of the father, and wounded hearts alike to father and mother, ensued. The wages of sin fell to the lot of more than the transgressor : all who were linked to him by love shared in the woe,—and the case is another illustration of the truth, that a single sinner destroys much good. With a Bible, and the counsels of an affectionate and weeping father, that youth left a happy home for ever. Its lessons he had been tempted to trample on : its prayers were unheeded by him : its affection had no controlling or curbing power on the heart which sin had fascinated or enslaved ; and, as the leper was separated from the society of men, this misguided youth was separated from his father's house, because of the moral taint which his presence was producing there.

Yet he did not forget that home. Nay, he came to himself at last, and wrote confessing at once his sin and his folly. Tossing to and fro upon the deep—shipwrecked again and again—in danger from pirates—assailed more than once, and on the eve of being murdered—sick, lonely, conscience-stricken, and forlorn—that wanderer roamed from land to land, from year to year, and, as often as he wrote to his parents, he had to confess and deplore his sins. “I often reflect on my past conduct,” he said, “and bitterly bewail my folly. If I had not done what I ought not to have done, I might now be resting comfortably under your roof, instead of having to bear very great hardships by night and by day : but I will not complain of my chastisements : I have indeed far greater comforts than I deserve . . . . Oh, how I look back on the hopes and fears, the alarms and anxieties of my dear parents ! If God permits me ever to see them again, I hope it will be

under different circumstances and feelings."—It was thus that wanderer wrote in letter after letter. His bitter regrets and the discomforts of his new position were alike apparent—the wages of sin had been won, and they were paid.

Though young Richmond's waywardness was not speedily subdued, it soon became manifest that the truth had *some* power over the wanderer's mind. Amid his tossings to and fro, he did all the good he could in preventing evil and promoting what is right. He carried Bibles and tracts from harbour to harbour, and spread them wherever he found opportunity. He wrote to Britain for missionaries—and though by his misconduct abroad he was cast upon the world at the age of seventeen, without means of livelihood, without friends or even an acquaintance, God saw him while yet a great way off; he was "lone, wandering, but not lost," even amid the tempests which he had to brave; and there is ample reason for believing that the lessons which his mother taught, or the prayers which his father offered on his behalf, were not unnoticed by the Stay of the destitute. After several years of wandering, the youth was returning to his home; but he died at sea, worn down by toil and disease, and his body found a resting-place—if that be not a misnomer—in the depths of the ocean. Too late at least for his earthly happiness, he had become "true to the kindred points of home and heaven." And is not this case another beacon? While it may encourage parents to pray and not faint, it might warn the young that there is nothing before them but sorrow, when God's truth and home affections are outraged.

Again: on a cold and wintry day in the year 1803, a youth left his native town of Kelso to find his way to the

great metropolis of Britain and the world. It was with a heavy heart that he set out from home, and on one of the bridges which connect Scotland with England, he stood and wept till the tear had nearly frozen on his cheek. On his eighteenth birth-day he found himself in London, and scarcely had he reached it when a companion attempted to lead him into the paths of the destroyer. But with the firmness of true principle, he repelled the temptation, and left the youth, whom he had known a short time before in his native place, walking as the virtuous do, to hurry along the road which leads to death. That misguided one would not be warned by his friend, and the dupe of his own heart must reap as he chose to sow.

The young friend whom he had thus tried to entice into the cockatrice's den—James Nisbet, afterwards the well-known publisher—hurried away from that dark scene, and the remembrance of that night helped, as an anchor, to keep him immovable through life. While dissipation led to the early death of the one, his example was like a beacon above a rock to the other. It stimulated him to decision. That fostered and fortified his early piety; and sad as had been his setting out from home, or painful his adventure with his dissolute friend, young Nisbet soon became marked for consistency and force of principle. "He loved the habitation of God's house," and the blessings which he experienced there led him in future years, when principle was crowned with the blessing of God, to expend large sums of money in building churches both in Scotland and in England. In truth, the lad who had wept such bitter tears when leaving the home of his childhood, lived to wield an extensive influence for good, in this and many other lands. Mission-

aries from every shore found an asylum or a welcome in his hospitable abode. His systematic order, his zeal, his activity, his ardour, his large liberality, his devoutness, his hearty, joyous nature, placed him in the front ranks of the Christian men of business, the real philanthropists, who at once adorn and bless the metropolis. And he died as he had lived, in the act of labouring to do good ; he went down to the grave honoured by all good men, and wept by not a few with very genuine tears. " His early outset and his long career " in godliness blessed both himself and hundreds besides.

Now, if young Richmond was a beacon, here is a model. The example of James Nisbet is one which might encourage all who are not already blinded by sin, or so far its dupe as to expect happiness for the soul in what entailed misery and a curse at once upon a globe and a race.

We might add many examples to the same effect. Among the Mohammedans at Tangiers, a missionary once found a dying lad, the son of godly Scottish parents, who had left his home slighting, as he confessed, all that they had done to guide him to the Saviour. But after a career of folly and of trial, when death and his sins found him out together, he felt the full misery of having fled from a holy home. He supposed that mercy there could be none for one so reckless. His sins, his companions, his pleasures were all unavailing now ; and if he was saved during his last breaths, when he cried vehemently for mercy, it was " so as by fire." He is another beacon, even though he be a brand plucked from the burning.



## CHAPTER XXI.

## HEAVEN A HOME.

Heirs of the Promises—"Our Father"—The House of many Mansions—The Elder Brother—The Son—The Spirit of Adoption—The Great Family—A Mother's Power—A Family in Heaven—The Mother—The Father—The Children—Conclusion.

IN the Word of God we are encouraged to be "followers of them who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises." Death makes sad ravages in our homes: he drags the objects of our affection from our embrace, and leaves us little but a mournful memory of what we once enjoyed, in contrast with our present forlorn or widowed condition. But while we are thus bereaved, our God comes in His Word, and if we have hope concerning the departed, He bids us prepare to follow them. The tie transferred from earth to heaven is employed to draw us upwards—the human unites with the Divine to fix our affections upon the things which are above—to give reality to the unseen, or nearness to the distant.

And, in the same way, to invest heaven with additional charms, it is associated with all that is venerable, or tender, or dear in a home. Heaven is, in truth, our home—earth is our house of bondage: there we are at rest—here we are strangers and pilgrims; and God only wise has thus linked our deepest sympathies with the heritage of the righteous for ever.

For example, the first clause of Scripture which nearly all

are taught to lisp is, "Our Father who art in heaven;" and the little child or the hoary pilgrim is thus trained to associate the venerable name of Father with that of God, till heaven becomes our better home. The fondest endearments of earth are employed to make the eternal world more intelligible, more palpable and powerful. That wondrous prayer fosters the right Christian spirit. It is catholic, for it says, "Our." It is reverential, for it says, "Hallowed be Thy name." It is missionary, for it says, "Thy kingdom come." It is moral, for it adds, "Thy will be done." It inculcates dependence, saying, "Give us this day our daily bread." It teaches forgiveness and caution: it leaves us reposing in humble confidence upon God—but the basis of the whole is the filial. It relates to the Family Head, and makes our God "our Father."

But this is not all; it is only the beginning. Christ speaks on this subject, and says, "My God and your God, my Father and your Father." It is through the First-born of many brethren that we are guided to our heavenly Father. The Elder Brother takes us by the hand, and makes us joint heirs with himself; so that in life and at death, a home and a heritage are ever our associations with heaven, if Christ be indeed our Elder Brother. All that is connected in the mind of a seaman with the harbour of his home, or all that is constraining in the mind of a dutiful son, in connexion with a distant but much-loved parent, is enlisted to inweave our affections with hereafter.

Or more explicit still: The Saviour points us to his Father's house as one "of many mansions." In that home of glory there is room enough and to spare; and if we be tempted to fear that we may be excluded, the Saviour

assures the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty that he is able to save to the uttermost. As to some ample abode, where blessedness reigns unbroken for ever, he points us to his heavenly home—a Father's—he bids us look along “the golden vistas into heaven,” and be so attracted by its glory as to make sure of arriving there at last—a child of God, a joint heir with Christ.

Besides, the Saviour was a Son, “the Son of God.” In glory this is, as in shame it was, a name of the Redeemer; and by such a title we are drawn again towards our heavenly abode, by one of the strongest ties that can link one being to another. As the Son of God the Saviour is Divine, as the Son of man he is human; and thus as God our Saviour, he raises us above the powers even of earth and of sin. Now, all this makes heaven more attractive; we can rejoice in it more hopefully, while we anticipate the heritage of the sons and daughters of a heavenly family. The charms of an earthly home all translated to glory, may thus at once gladden and hallow.

Nor should we fail to notice that the Spirit of grace is also the Spirit of adoption. He makes us new creatures in Christ, and in doing so, awakens feelings in our souls toward the Eternal, similar to those which we cherish to an earthly parent. Father, Son, and Spirit are thus glorified, while the children of a day are raised for ever to the rank of “sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.”

But we read farther, that “the whole family in heaven and on earth is named after Christ.” The Redeemed form one vast household where the God of all the families of the earth dispenses the joys which were purchased by the self-sacrifice of the Elder Brother. Pilgrims and strangers there become

fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God ; and though we can ill understand the words, amid the corruptions of earth, we know that nothing that defileth can enter that abode.

"I long to be able," said a gifted man, "to make heaven and eternity the home of my thoughts, to which, though they must often wander abroad on other concerns, they may regularly return and find their best entertainment." To make such longing common, heaven is invested with all that is tender and attractive, or august and venerable ; and when all this is borne in mind, we may well reiterate the question—"What could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it?" What more close or endearing charm could have been employed to elevate our thoughts from earth to heaven ? We must find something more than infinite ere we can discover a wisdom more profound or more comprehensive than this ; and when thus presented by our heavenly Father, our future state should enchain our thoughts : we may well long for it like the exile for his native land, or the seaman driven of the winds and tost, for the haven of his home.

And this is sometimes realised in the case of the dying. A gifted Italian lady, who had embraced the religion of the Bible, exclaimed with all but her last breath, "The chamber seems full of sweet flowers and odours." A gifted German in the act of dying, and in answer to a question how he felt, replied, "Some things are growing clearer." And the last words of another, after a struggle of intensest agony, were, "Now it begins to look lovely." It is thus that the bright beatitudes of eternity are sometimes anticipated. When we are taught by the Spirit of God to run the eye

along the horizon-line which divides this world from the next, and descry the summits of the holy mountain, or the towers of the New Jerusalem, we can then catch glimpses of our sinless, griefless home.

And with such glimpses of our heavenly abode, our remarks upon Home, its laws, its joys, and its sorrows, are near a close. To that house not made with hands, in the city of our God, the ransomed family is slowly gathering home. We cry out, indeed, against our "deaths oft," our crushing woes, our wasting diseases. But are they not all the servants of our Father, calling us to a dwelling-place on high? This is the nursery in which we are reared; Heaven is the home which we are to inhabit; the heritage which we are to enjoy. Here we are minors; our majority approaches—and they are blessed who are already home, the journey over, the perils past, "the fever and the fret" of this embryo life for ever at an end.

It sometimes happens that whole families are transplanted thither. After wandering for a time, and trying to find rest in some other way than that which leads to the New Jerusalem, soul after soul has been led into the narrow path; and a closing example of that class, may be blessed to encourage some by the way.

A family consisted of a father, a mother, and four daughters, and for a time the god of this world was served in that abode—of all the six, the mother alone professed to be a follower of the Son of God. She, however, became steadfast and immovable. Disease was first commissioned to do God's work on one of the daughters. It menaced her life, but she was deaf to the warning, and wept at the cruelty of those who enforced it. The disease, however, was

inexorable. She was at last compelled to face death; and amid strong efforts to grasp the world a little and a little longer, she was induced by a merciful severity, to turn her thoughts towards the better country. She sought it in the right way—by the Cross—and the record of her experience tells that “her death was joyful and triumphant.”

The father's turn came next. He had long been a decent worldling, who deemed anxiety about the soul superfluous: he would have shrunk from avowing infidelity, yet was he at heart an unbeliever. But his daughter's death unlocked the prison of his soul. He also turned his thoughts to a heavenly dwelling-place, and was believed to have found peace in the path which leads us thither—that is, in Jesus, “the way.”

Another daughter next passed from death to life. One by one the household were knit to the Saviour; and the blessed spectacle of a whole family, thus transplanted to glory, encourages, while it points us homewards. It was the mother's prayers, and watchings, and lessons, which led to that result. She could cherish the hope that her family were all gathered home before her to that abode whence we “go no more out” for ever; and it were indeed a blessed thing were parents more prayerfully bent upon seeing their households thus savingly brought to Christ. Why should there be delay, as if this were not the accepted time? Oh, why such supineness on a subject so momentous, while we often have but a vague peradventure, if even that, regarding the souls of our households? Surely if we felt, in such a case, as we ought to do, the throne would be besieged for Christian homes, for converted children, for godly domestics, and for families so christianised that they would prove the glory

and the strength of the land. Parents, realise your position : make these things the burden of your morning and your evening prayer : let the glory of God, let the love of Christ, let the happiness of your children, all constrain to this, and then take up the hymn, in a spirit more reverent and solemn than that of him who sang it first—

" This world is all a fleeting show,  
For man's illusion given,  
The smiles of joy, the tears of woe  
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow—  
There's nothing true but heaven.

" And false the light on glory's plume,  
As fading hues of even,  
And love, and hope, and beauty's bloom,  
Are blossoms gather'd for the tomb—  
There's nothing bright but heaven.

" Poor wanderers of a stormy day ;  
From wave to wave we're driven ;  
And fancy's flash and reason's ray  
Serve but to light the troubled way—  
There's nothing calm but heaven."

And such are the crowning results designed to be produced by Home, with all its mighty moral power ; its endearments and authority ; its examples and lessons ; its goodness and severity ; its heavenly standard, and its hallowed joys. Be such results promoted, and God is glorified, while man is safe ; but where that is not accomplished, the domestic constitution has not been used as God directs, and the abuse of the best things, in one case more, has turned them into the worst. That nation is on the way to the grave, where domestic ties are trampled on, and where the passions or the caprices of men preside instead of the will of God. Witness the Jews of old. Parents hold in their hands the happiness

of home—and more than that, of their country—and more than that, of the eternal world. Let them understand their mission. Let them fulfil it ; and though only a single family in a land were thus guided by the will of God, it would appear beautiful in the eyes of heaven, as some brilliant object embalmed in amber, or a solitary star amid an else universal gloom.



